

THE SOCIALIST PARTY AND WAR

PREFACE

*We published a pamphlet **War and the Working Class** in 1936 and a more detailed study in 1950, with the title **The Socialist Party and War**. Both are now out of print. The present publication is a revised edition dealing with more recent events and developments.*

Since the formation of the Socialist Party of Great Britain in 1904 many changes have taken place. Armaments have become more costly and vastly more destructive. Old empires have shrunk and been replaced by new ones and new nations have been formed, all prepared to wage war. Two world wars led to the creation of, first, the League of Nations and then the United Nations, both supposed to be dedicated to the preservation of peace, and there have been scores of disarmament conferences and anti-war campaigns, all of them utterly futile as a means of preventing war. Smaller wars have continued and a third world war is an ever-present threat.

In essentials nothing has changed; capitalism in 1904 was the cause of war and it still is, though discussion of the war issue has been further confused by the emergence of war-waging regimes falsely claiming to be socialist.

In all these years no change has taken place in the Socialist Party of Great Britain's attitude of opposition to capitalism's wars, based as it is on socialist principles and the interest of the working class. Only Socialism will abolish war from the earth.

Executive Committee

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

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War in the Modern World

At one time it was possible for many people to think of war as something accidental, as a needless interruption of natural and peaceful trading and cultural relationships between nations. The outbreak of war was said to be caused by the stupidities or miscalculations of diplomats or by the arrogance and irritability of statesmen who reacted over-emotionally to some such incident as the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Francis Ferdinand at Sarajevo in June, 1914. Viewed in this way it often appeared that war could have been avoided, and many books have been written after past wars to show that if this or that foreign minister had behaved differently or if there had been a more level-headed holder of the office the war would not have happened. This view is less often heard today. It has been largely destroyed by the events leading up to two world wars and by the 'cold wars' that have been going on since the second world war ended. The murder at Sarajevo was merely an incident seized upon by ruling class groups to further their ambitions. It came after years of competitive armament-building by Germany and her allies on one side and by Britain and her allies on the other, expansionist German capitalism being set on challenging Russia as well as the older colonial powers which dominated the world.

It became clearer still at the outbreak of World War II. It was obvious that the outbreak of war in 1939 was not an unexpected event, for, as everyone realised at the time, the European powers had been busily preparing for that eventuality after the rise of the Nazi regime in Germany and the re-emergence of Germany as a major military power. At least a year before the war started the European peoples were oppressed by the fear that it would not be long delayed.

Since 1945 we have had years of 'cold war' between Russia and America and their respective allies and more recently the 'cold war' between Russia and China, with the rival groups engaged in armament building and other war preparations openly directed towards likely war with a named rival. Today war is the routine preoccupation of governments.

It is one of the aims of this pamphlet to show that wars in the modern world are due neither to the avoidable mistakes of individual ministers nor to their wantonly seeking war for its own sake. The contest by force of arms is an extension and consequence of an underlying contest in which all governments are engaged and which is going on at all times in trade and other fields. Wars reflect the determination of governments to defend or to gain control of valuable possessions by armed might when other means have failed. The purpose of war is to gain or to maintain the mastery of territories where there are rich mineral deposits, vital land, sea or air routes, or areas where goods can be sold or capital invested.

These are the *objects* of modern war. The *method* is to annihilate or disperse the armed forces of the enemy government; destroy its armaments and means of supply; starve, terrify and undermine its civilian population by blockade and bombing, and by propaganda to spread panic and defeatism.

The methods of war have changed in the past and are changing rapidly now as a result of the advances in industry, communications and scientific knowledge. The instruments of war have become more complex and costly and can only be produced and operated where and for so long as they have behind them highly developed, large-scale industry, chemical and scientific resources. Through the development of inter-continental ballistic missiles and long-range bombers the civilian populations are now in the direct line of battle, and it has become more and more important for warring Powers to immobilise the combat forces by attacking the

civilian workers and the armaments industries. As wars have become immeasurably more destructive, the destruction falls increasingly on the civil population; and as the preparations for war have become more costly the work of perfecting the means of attack on enemy cities takes precedence over the provision of defence for civilians.

These changes in the technique of war have the result of reducing to an absurdity the idea that the armed forces safeguard the civil population. In the second world war nearly every country suffered great loss of life at home, and great damage to factories and houses. America was the exception, safeguarded by distance, but that immunity is unlikely to continue into another war. The great extension of the range of guided missiles and bombing planes has brought the whole of the earth's surface into the danger zone. Nobody can doubt that in a future world war centres of population will be exposed to great and perhaps irreparable destruction. In face of what is now common knowledge no government can provide immunity for civilians should war occur. Talk of Civil Defence can only be a pretence and its preparations only a farce in a world of long-range nuclear weapons. Today the civilian population suffers even from the mere preparations for war. The testing of nuclear weapons which has taken place continuously since the last war pollutes the atmosphere with radio-active materials. The full harmful effects of such radio- active fall-out on both present and future generations are still uncertain.

The civilian population is also involved in war preparations in other ways, for the willingness of civilians to join up and fight and to back war policies is an important factor strengthening a government in its confrontation with other nations. This is why governments cannot afford to allow pacifist and anti-war sentiments to become widespread amongst their citizens. It is necessary to indoctrinate the population with patriotism and a willingness to die, if necessary, for 'their country'. This process begins early in life in the schools. It is here that children are first taught blind loyalty to the state under whose rule they happen to have been born. They learn the words of its national anthem and to idolise its head of state and flag. They are taught a history of the past battles and wars in which their country has been involved, calculated to show that readiness for war is a condition of national survival. It is a history which glorifies military exploits and teaches patriotism. Children are encouraged to join uniformed organisations as preparation for military service. For adults, too, there is no let-up of the pressures, conscious and unconscious, which teach patriotism and glorify the armed forces. The population must be taught to be ready to serve as cannon-fodder. Even this traditional, anti-militarist phrase is a little out-dated as in modern war people suffer whether they are in or out of uniform.

One thing is clear: a world war in the future may be ten or a hundred times more destructive than it has been in the past. All who contemplate waging war and all who contemplate giving their support to war preparations have to bear in mind the fate that they are preparing for other human beings - and for themselves.

It only remains to add at this point a reminder of the socialist case that will be developed later in these pages. No matter what form war propaganda may take, it is the socialist contention that the basic cause of conflict in the modern world that leads on to war is the way in which society is organised: The cause of war today is the rivalry inherent in capitalism. Those who endorse capitalism are supporting a social system which gives rise to war.

Untenable Theories about the Cause of War

AT ONE TIME it was common to 'explain' war as a punishment visited by a god on a sinful world, just as it was common to explain plague, pestilence and famine in the same way. As the development of medical science and sanitation and the growth of mankind's powers of production have made those old ideas untenable, some people have hoped and believed that all the evils affecting mankind, war included, would progressively give way before a steady growth of knowledge and enlightenment. As the events of the past half-century have cruelly exposed this to be an illusion, many other theories have been advanced to explain the continuance of war.

One belief is that pressure of population is the cause of war. As the population of a country increases, it is argued, so does the demand for food and products of industry, and in the end this leads to war. This picture of pressure of population is a fair description of tribal wars in primitive communities and of past migrations of peoples driven to move by failure of water supplies or by the exhaustion or drying up of the land on which they lived; but it does not explain the wars of the present age, though it has been a convenient guise in which to present the aims of certain governments. Before the second world war the Hitler government in Germany and its two allies, Italy and Japan, used the theme of the necessity of obtaining 'living space' to popularise war but none of the three governments was doing anything to discourage the growth of population; indeed, in two of them - Germany and Italy - it was official policy to promote an increase of the birth-rate. In the modern world a war situation can develop when there is not even the pretence that there is a population problem - as in the 20-year 'cold war' between Russia and America; both countries have enormous resources available to support a larger population.

If the world, or any part of it, lacked the means to supply the needs of the population then common sense would suggest that governments, alone or by agreement with each other, would concentrate all their efforts on increasing the supply of goods. Such direct solution is not possible under capitalism because goods are not produced solely for use but in order to be sold to those who can afford to pay, so that poverty and deprivation still exist whether the population is large or small - hence the existence side by side in the world of unsaleable surpluses and people in need.

At the same time, instead of concentrating on the problem of increasing the supply of food and other requirements, governments divert an enormous and growing part of their resources of men and materials to the maintenance of armed forces and the production of armaments. They all say that they do this reluctantly and only under urgent necessity, and we must examine that plea; but it is necessary that we should first recognise that all governments, by their actions, show that they regard armaments as of more importance than feeding their populations. In all countries, 'guns come before butter'.

When governments plead that they have no choice about taking men out of civilian industries in order to put them into the armed forces and armament production, their excuse is that they must do this in order to protect themselves against other armed Powers, that is against each other. It is true that in the jungle of modern capitalism if one country disarmed alone it would quickly fall a victim to aggression; but why cannot all disarm? What is it that makes them potential enemies of each other when on the face of it all have the same interest in mutual co-operation? This would seem to be a vicious circle. We are told that populations become too big for the available supplies of food, etc., yet the available supplies are reduced so that armies and armaments can be maintained, and then, periodically, vast areas of the world are devastated in

war to an extent far outstripping any reduction of population by death. After a war the ability to support the world's population is again curtailed by a new arms race on a greater scale than before, making ever more demands on the resources that could, but for capitalism, be used to meet human needs.

A particular form taken by the argument that overpopulation causes war is that when unemployment is high countries must expand and acquire more territory, especially colonies, in order to find work for the unemployed. During the crisis years of the nineteen-thirties this argument was used by the German and Italian governments to support their demand for colonies in Africa, but it will not stand examination. If unemployment resulted from overpopulation it would show itself in a steadily growing unemployed army, chiefly affecting those countries in which population was increasing most rapidly. But unemployment does not follow that course. During crisis years unemployment sharply increases everywhere and is plainly due to the industrial and trading conditions of capitalism and not to a natural growth of population. And when an economic crisis of capitalism passes, unemployment shrinks though the population is still growing. We see that a country can at some times find employment for nearly all the workers and at other times has large numbers out of work. The cause of unemployment lies in the social system - not in the size of the population.

In the years since the end of the second world war unemployment almost everywhere has been lower than in the years before the war, yet this did not produce a lessening of the war tension -on the contrary they were years of continuing conflict and nuclear armament.

Another view about wars used to be that they are caused by the armaments firms, the merchants of death. Official inquiries in America and elsewhere in the nineteen-thirties confirmed the popular belief that armament manufacturers, having a financial interest in selling their products, encourage the international armaments race. They resist disarmament schemes, divide up the world's armaments market among themselves, supply arms to all governments without distinction, seek to influence newspapers and politicians to promote sales and generally apply to their commodities the methods capitalists apply in every other trade. When all due allowance is made for these factors, however, we are still without an explanation for war. Armament firms take advantage of antagonisms that already exist between governments: it still has to be explained why the antagonisms exist in the first place. Armament firms fish in troubled waters and help to keep them troubled: but governments are antagonistic to each other over markets, trade routes, strategic frontiers, etc., irrespective of anything that the armament firms may do.

The argument that wars are caused by the private manufacturers of armaments has now been overtaken by events. Those who held that view thought they had found a remedy by abolishing private manufacture and having armament production and sales under government control. This has very largely come about but now it is the governments themselves which for profit, or for the opportunity to try out new weapons, or in line with their foreign policies, supply armaments in the world market. A recent estimate is that 95 per cent of world armaments trade is in the hands of governments. It has become normal for governments which have the necessary facilities (including the British Labour government which held office between 1964 and 1970) to organise export drives for the sale of arms.

Another suggested cause of war is differences of religion and ideology. This view too is a mistaken one; it mistakes for a *cause* of war the propaganda used by statesmen to whip up support for it. The question arises why is it that governments exploit religion for making war and not for opposing war. What happens in practice is that when a government wants to stir up war fever it will use any means that are to hand to suit the background of the particular war. If it happens to be a war against a country with a different religion then the religious appeal will be made; as also will appeals based on differences of language or custom or of political institutions, or any other factor likely to serve.

History can show as many examples of wars between countries with the same religious beliefs as between countries of different religion, and on examination it will be found that even where religious differences played a part in the war propaganda the real cause of the dispute lay elsewhere. England's trade wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are an example of the relative importance of trade and religion. Catholic Spain and Portugal in the sixteenth century monopolised trade with the East and with the new world across the Atlantic. Under Elizabeth I England entered into an alliance with Protestant Holland against Catholic Spain. On this H. de Gibbins in his *Industrial History of England* wrote: "the motive of the alliance was partly religious, but the shrewdness of the queen and her statesmen no doubt foresaw more than spiritual advantages to be gained thereby". Cromwell continued the policy of attacking the Spanish monopoly and in doing so "was supported both by the religious views of the Puritans and the desires of the merchants when he declared war against England's great foe". In 1655 Jamaica was taken from Spain, thus opening up the West Indies to English trade and colonization. Looking only at the war against Spain it would be possible to believe that religious sympathy played the major role, and trade rivalry at most a supporting one; but other events during the same period show such a view to be untenable. A common interest in Protestantism notwithstanding, England and Holland were at war in 1652 and de Gibbins wrote: "Cromwell with the full consent of mercantile England declared war against the Dutch, who were now more our rivals than our friends".

In 1655 what gave Cromwell the opportunity to take Dunkirk from Spain was that Catholic Spain was at war with Catholic France; and the purpose for which Dunkirk was taken was "with a view to securing England a monopoly of the Channel to the exclusion of our old friends the Dutch"; this though 'our old friends' and former allies were Protestants. Samuel Pepys, in his Diary, has an interesting entry for 2 February. 1664. He records having listened in a coffee house to a Captain Cocke, who "discoursed well of the good effects in some kind of a Dutch war and conquest". The purport of the discourse from the Captain was: "the trade of the world is too little for us two, therefore one must go down".

It is equally mistaken to suppose that the political, cultural and ideological differences that form so large a part of the propaganda of countries at war are the cause of the war. In the first world war autocratic Russia was the ally of the western democracies. In August 1939 the Stalin and Hitler governments, which had for years violently condemned each other's systems, found it possible to enter into a pact of friendship. The moment this happened British politicians and the press declared that they had always known that Nazism and the Russian system were almost identical tyrannies. Then, when Russia was invaded by Germany the same politicians and newspapers became silent on the subject of the Russian dictatorship and habitually referred to that country as one of the democracies. In the cold war that followed 1945 they sought to horrify their readers with descriptions of the Russian regime which they now again represented to be little better than Hitler's.

Then we have the example of the quarrel between China and Russia. The two countries have their governmental and social systems organised on the same totalitarian model. In both countries all political activity, except that of the so-called Communist Party, is rigorously suppressed. Both countries work to develop a form of state capitalism which both governments misrepresent as being Socialism. Nevertheless they came into open conflict and made mutual charges of imperialism, betrayal, tyranny, etc. The real cause of the conflict was not a disagreement about ideologies but the clashing interests of the two Powers. China was expanding and challenging the Russian domination of the so-called Communist bloc.

In the second world war the horrors of the Nazi concentration camps took a prominent place in the propaganda of the Western Powers, the U.S.A. and Russia, and Germany was represented as an inherently barbarous nation. In the cold war that followed, the attention of the populations

of the countries grouped against Russia was diverted to the concentration camps in the latter country, and by the beginning of 1950 the twin ideas of incorporating a rearmed Western Germany in the forces of the Western Powers and of incorporating a rearmed Eastern Germany in the forces of the Russian group were being accepted by the respective groups of governments. Today West Germany is a member of NATO along with the U.S.A. and Britain, and East Germany belongs to the Russian-dominated Warsaw Pact.

Lastly, modern wars are not to be explained by some supposed vicious and aggressive streak in human nature. It is not the mass of the populations of any country who desire war and plan years ahead to prepare for it. Always it is the governments which, having been pushed towards war by the rivalries of capitalism, lay their plans (as far as possible in secret) and organise the forces of destruction after having gone to unlimited trouble to win over the reluctant masses to acceptance of the need for war preparations and war. It is one of the bitter ironies of modern history that the politicians who work to whip up the war spirit among their, at first, unwarlike populations should have the effrontery to charge their sheep-like followers with such wolfish proclivities. So little is it true that the human nature of the man in the street lusts for war that there is hardly a country in the world which does not have to employ force in the form of conscription to compel its able-bodied population, first to train and then to fight.

A variant of this theory attributes the wars of this century solely to the alleged war-like nature of the German people; but when the late Winston Churchill in 1950 proposed that West Germany should play an active part in Europe's military defence, the then leader of the German Social Democratic Party, Kurt Schumacher, declared: "We Germans have got quite enough troubles. Why not leave us in peace" (*Daily Herald*, 18 March 1950). When France made an actual proposal to this effect, a spokesman of the Christian Democratic Party which then formed the German Government said: "We do not intend to have anything to do with such a plan" (*Daily Mail*, 31 March 1950). In the end the Western governments did manage to overcome the objections of the German government and people, and West Germany is today a leading member of NATO.

It is true that the German population, like the population of all other countries, is nationalist in outlook and may be won over to war; but it will not be because it loves war for its own sake but because, being still wedded to capitalist ideas, it as yet knows no other way out of the international conflict into which capitalism drives all countries.

If history may seem to give support to the view that Germany has been the sole cause of war it is only because Germany, coming late to unification and the struggle for colonies and world trade, was in a different position from the older imperialisms that had already occupied the best colonial territories and cornered a large share of world trade. The latter were concerned to hold on to what they had; German capitalism's problem was to expand at their expense.

In this age of nuclear weapons it is fantastic to suggest that the peoples of the world want war. Why then the arms race and threat of war?

CHAPTER THREE

Capitalism the Cause of Modern War

When Socialists say that capitalism is the cause of the rivalries that lead to war in the modern world the answer is sometimes given that this cannot be true because wars took place before capitalism existed.

It is necessary to recognise a distinction between what may in a general way be called 'economic' causes of past wars and the particular causes of wars that arise under capitalism. Reverting to an illustration given earlier in this pamphlet, insufficiency of food in past ages could induce a tribe to make war on a neighbouring tribe to gain control of more fertile land. Such a war would accurately be described as being due to an economic cause, the absolute shortage of food; and it might be quite impossible with the poor tools and methods known at that time to solve the problem in any other way than by fighting it out for the chance that the victors might survive. As an example the Hunnish invasion of Europe in the fifth century A.D. is attributed to the drying up of water courses in their Asiatic homeland.

In our own age the problem is a different one. Now the means exist for producing enough to supply continuously the needs of all. With modern industrial and scientific knowledge ample food, clothing, houses and the rest of the needs of human beings could be produced if all resources were used and none were wasted. The trouble is that they are not used to the full. In a multitude of ways production is deliberately restricted; land and materials are utilised for non-productive purposes; millions of men, through unemployment or military service and armament production, are withdrawn from the task of satisfying human needs; growers are given financial inducements to curtail production, and periodically vast amounts of food and other materials are destroyed in order to keep up prices - quite apart from the destruction that takes place in war itself. If in our own day millions of people are undernourished or starving, while simultaneously in the U.S.A. and other countries enormous quantities of foodstuffs are withheld from the market (with deterioration or even destruction as their likely end), it cannot be said that undernourishment or starvation is economically unavoidable. It is capitalism that presents the U.S.A. and other governments with the choice between releasing the food for sale at what it will fetch - which would ruin farmers by depressing prices - and withholding the food to get high prices with the result that poverty-stricken people cannot buy it. A conference of the governments of the chief wheat exporting countries - Argentine, Australia, Canada, the U.S.A. and the European Economic Community - agreed in May 1970 to curb the output of wheat (*Financial Times*, 7 May 1970).

Capitalism and capitalist interests induce every government to behave in a manner which creates antagonism with other capitalist groups and governments, with war as the threatened outcome. The needs of the world's population could be satisfied by co-operation but it is in the nature of capitalism to prohibit genuine co-operation.

In the capitalist world we are not dealing with a simple economic problem of insufficiency but with the problem of insufficiency created by the capitalist form of ownership of the means of production and distribution. While millions of people are starving in Asia and elsewhere because they lack the money to buy food, there are wealthy property owners in those same areas who are not at all affected. And while in America there are food surpluses that could be used to satisfy the needs of starving and undernourished people, there are large numbers of Americans who because they are poor cannot buy the food available where they live.

When, therefore, socialists say that capitalism causes modern war it is this capitalist system of private ownership and production for profit that we have in mind. It is no answer to say that there were also wars in times gone by.

In saying that capitalism is the source of modern wars socialists do not mean that capitalist wars are deliberately plotted by individual capitalists or groups for the purpose of making money, even though some individuals may do this. Normally it would be more accurate to say that governments, in trying to handle the problems and antagonisms created by capitalism, turn to war when other means fail.

What then is this system of society known as capitalism? Capitalism is the system in which the means of production and distribution are monopolised by a minority and used to produce articles for sale on a market with a view to profit. This class ownership of accumulated property and of the wealth being produced day by day, places the capitalists in the position of being a *privileged* class, the position of being freed from dependence on wages for their livelihood; while the propertyless class, the workers, having to sell their mental and physical energies, their labour-power, to the employers are a *subject* class. The owning class must maintain armed forces in order to protect their privileged position; at home against the have-nots, and abroad against the armed forces of foreign states. What the workers receive is a wage or salary which represents the price at which they sell their labour-power. This selling price is the subject of bargaining between the workers, individually or through their trade unions, and the employers; but it coincides more or less closely with the cost of maintaining the worker and his family at the standard of living usual in the particular industry and country at a given time. After the payment of wages and all the costs of production (raw materials, fuel, upkeep of machinery, etc.), there is a surplus left. It is out of this surplus that the landlords, moneylending capitalists and shareholders receive their rents, interest and profits, and the capital for the expansion of industry is provided.

Nor does it make any essential difference that in all countries some industries and services are operated by the government or by boards appointed by the government and that in the extreme case, Russia, the bulk of industry and much of agriculture is run by such state concerns. In all sections of the Russian economy production is for sale at a profit.

In order to make the profits which are the purpose for which industry is carried on under capitalism, the products have to be marketed in competition with the products of rivals. The key to profitable marketing is cheapness; and cheapness is sought, among other ways, by constantly trying to extract more work from the workers, by obtaining all the advantages of mass production. In many fields of production the economies of mass production can only be achieved where there is a big home market available, which gives an initial advantage to a country such as the U.S.A.

Motor cars and many kinds of chemicals, for example, mass-produced for the American market, can be put on the world market more cheaply than would be possible if the home market were small. Mass production industries, therefore, develop productive capacity far beyond the needs of the home market and more and more depend for continuous sales on the ability to hold foreign markets as well. This leads to encroachments on the home markets of foreign rivals which causes the governments of the countries concerned to retaliate with tariffs, quotas, subsidies and other methods of excluding foreign goods. It is in recognition of the need for larger markets to sustain mass production industries that efforts have been made since the second world war to integrate Western Europe, with or without Britain and the British Commonwealth, so that the single European market shall be able to stand up to the competition of the U.S.A. on the one side and the developing industrial and trading power of state capitalist Russia and its empire on the other. This is what is behind the European Economic Community.

In the last resort capitalist trade struggles lead to war, the object of which is to acquire or defend markets and territories rich in mineral and other resources and in exploitable populations. Investment of capital in foreign countries has been a typical form taken by expanding capitalism, or imperialism, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is closely

linked with the search for raw materials and markets, and the exploitation of colonial populations. Governments direct their efforts to maintaining these foreign investments and shape their foreign policies and arms programmes accordingly.

During the nineteenth century Britain and other European powers struggled with each other to obtain colonies and to hold strategic points necessary to protect communications with them. Late in the day Germany entered into the struggle for colonies, followed in the twentieth century by Japan's seizure of Korea, Manchuria and Northern China, though Japan was thrown out after defeat in the second world war. The same motives sent Italy into Libya, Somaliland and Ethiopia. In such a struggle the importance of vital but vulnerable waterways such as the Suez and Panama Canals is obvious; and for generations Russia, whether under the Tsars or a Bolshevik government, has sought to gain control of the Dardanelles in order to have free access to the Mediterranean.

The end of the second world war brought about a different balance of world power, with the decline of the British empire and the emergence of the U.S.A. and Russia as the two principal world powers. It also saw the increased importance of the Pacific as a centre of rivalry where already the U.S.A. has been involved, in Korea and in Vietnam, in two major wars with expanding China and its allies. With this decline of the British empire the navies and air fleets of the United States, with their necessary bases and fuelling points and supplies of petrol, have moved out over the surface of the globe to support what is, in effect, though not in name, an American empire, face to face with the expanding empire of Russia and latterly also of China. China has also appeared as a rival of Russia in Asia, and the rapid and enormous economic development of Japan makes that country again a major contender on the Pacific scene.

It is typical of world capitalism that there is no one Power permanently expansionist and others not. Some are industrially and militarily stronger than others but all, even the smallest are potentially expansionist because they are capitalist. Only limited power and opportunity holds them back.

Much is heard of the desirability of freeing colonial peoples from imperial domination but it should not be forgotten that the liberated countries all tread the same capitalist road, whether they ape Russia or the West; none of the nationalist movements seeks the only liberation that will solve the problem of war, liberation from capitalism. Indian nationalists sought and enforced their freedom from British rule when an enfeebled British capitalism could no longer hold India; but immediately India divided into rival States - India and Pakistan - arming against each other, quarrelling over the treatment of minorities and over trade questions and each seeking to dominate strategically important territories, such as Kashmir. This dispute still has not been settled. In 1962 India took advantage of the weakness of Portugal to grab the valuable port and mineral resources of Goa. India also got involved in a sizeable war with China over strategically important frontiers. Farther East two other former colonies, Indonesia and Malaysia, were in conflict.

Economic Causes of World War II

The basic cause of modern war is the international rivalries inseparable from capitalism. The particular background of the second world war was the formation of the German-Italian-Japanese alliance and their concerted effort to expand at the expense of weaker neighbours and of the older colonial powers, notably Britain, France and Holland.

Italy and Germany had long before 1914 entered into the colonial scramble but they developed late and found all the best territories and strategic ocean highways already dominated by the 'older and fatter bandits'. The line-up before 1914 was, on the one side, the 'Triple Alliance' of Germany, Italy and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and arrayed against their expansionist ambitions the 'Triple Entente' of Britain, France and Russia. The background of the first world war was the clash in the Balkans. Germany aimed to move through the Balkans across the Dardanelles and onwards, taking in the Middle East with its oil resources and strategic importance. It was given dramatic expression in the planned Berlin-Baghdad railway. Such a thrust meant cutting off Russia from its Balkan protégés and an outlet to the Mediterranean, and meant severing the British Empire life-line through the Suez Canal to India and beyond. France with her African interests was as vitally concerned as Britain to stop this German dream of world power.

When the war came in 1914 Italy deserted the Triple Alliance while Turkey joined it. Part of the Allied bribe to Italy was the secret promise of a rich share in the spoils of victory - a promise which Italy claimed was never kept.

Later on, in the early nineteen-twenties, with Germany prostrate and Russia weakened by the civil war and Allied intervention, Europe was dominated by France and the French system of alliances with Poland, Czechoslovakia and Romania, a system aimed both against the revival of Germany and against Russia. The British Government, following its traditional European balance of power policy, saw the need in the interest of British capitalism of helping Germany recover to offset French preponderance. A new factor came into 'being after the world crisis in 1931: the coming to power in Germany of the Hitler dictatorship.

The 1931 crisis was the breakdown in the system of international payments. Country after country went off the gold standard. The Wall Street crash of 1929 had triggered off a slump in trade and a contraction of the world market. Gold became concentrated in the hands of capitalists in the U.S.A., Britain, France and the countries associated with them. These states also had a monopoly of access to most of the sources of raw materials in the world. The world thus became divided into two groups; those countries which had the gold and raw materials and those which lacked them. Germany, Japan and Italy were in the second group and in a bid to solve the problems this presented, the governing parties organised on an aggressive totalitarian basis and resorted to policies which challenged the other, dominant group.

To get gold and currencies to buy essential raw materials the totalitarian states tried dumping, i.e. selling their products below cost. In their trade with other countries they used devices which avoided gold, such as barter and bilateral trade agreements and credits which had to be used to buy their goods. All these devices tended to tie their trading partners to them and thus take them out of the world market. The decline in the use of gold threatened the financial centres of London and New York. London was also threatened as the centre of dealings in raw materials. Pursuing these policies Germany had considerable success in Southern Europe and Latin America. Japan made headway in the markets of Southern Asia. In 1931 Japan used armed force in Manchuria to set up a trading monopoly there. In the past the imperialist powers

had decided on an open door policy for trade with China as none of them was strong enough to exclude all the others. Now Japan was trying to do just this, a policy which inevitably led to conflict with America and Britain. Italy used force to get an overseas market in Abyssinia in 1935.

The dominant powers decided on a determined campaign to regain the markets lost to the totalitarian countries. German, Japanese and Italian goods were boycotted. Credits were offered to the countries of Southern Europe to win them away from dependence on Germany. The more successful these policies were the more desperate became the economic position of German capitalism. Without the funds to give credits, force appeared to be the only way. Hence the annexation of Austria in 1938 and the breaking up of Czechoslovakia in 1939.

By now the conflict of economic interests was coming to a head. Germany was trying to keep its gains in Southern Europe by all means, including force, and Britain and France were using credits to undermine German influence. There was no backing down on either side. War would break out as soon as Britain and France decided to resist force with force. This was delayed as long as possible, particularly because of the vague anti-war feelings of British and French workers; but in September 1939 when Germany invaded Poland the second world war began. In a few years Russia and the U.S.A. were drawn in also. It was a war which blazed over all Europe and Asia and parts of Africa. The second world war was fought between rival groups of capitalist states over markets and sources of raw materials. It was not about democracy or Fascism. No one country can be blamed as the capitalist system is international. It was capitalism which caused the rival states to come into conflict. The contraction of the world market in the nineteen-thirties led to more intense competition and after a series of minor clashes to a second world war.

The Continuing Slaughter

The declared intention of the United Nations was "to cut the causes of war at their roots". A glance at history since the second world war shows that in this respect the U.N. has failed miserably and slaughter and destruction in the defence of capitalist interests has continued. The U.S.A., Britain and France, which already this century have fought and won two world wars to maintain their dominant position in the world, have faced a new challenge - this time from Russia and China.

The Korean war apart, where this rivalry has led to actual fighting it has not involved a direct major clash between the armed forces of the big Powers. In some instances, both sides have been content merely to back different groups in the internal struggles and civil wars that tend to accompany the birth of capitalism in the less developed parts of the world. Russia and China have pursued the deliberate policy of supporting all colonial revolts as a means of weakening the Western Powers. In such fighting troops of Britain, France, Australia and New Zealand have opposed insurrectionists armed by Russia and China. In other instances, in total disregard of the paper pledges of the United Nations, the Western Powers have sent their troops to various parts of the world to protect vital economic and strategic interests.

Taken together these various military actions have meant continuous 'death and desolation' since 1945 - in all more than 50 wars, among them:

- 1945-54 French war in Indo-China against 'communists' and nationalists.
- 1946-49 Dutch (and British) against Indonesian Nationalists.
- 1948-60 British, Australian and New Zealand troops against Malayan 'communists'.
- 1950-52 Major clash of Western Powers and China in Korea.
- 1954-62 French against nationalists in Algeria.
- 1954-59 British against Greek Cypriot nationalists in Cyprus.
- 1954-60 British against Mau Mau in Kenya.
- 1961- Big American army, with smaller allied forces, against North Vietnam backed by China and Russia.

In addition, for many years British troops were involved in fighting in Aden and in Oman in South Arabia. In 1956 British and French troops landed at Suez and two years later British troops flew to Jordan and in 1961 to Kuwait. In 1958 American troops landed in the Lebanon. In Latin America the U.S.A. backed invasions of Guatemala (1954) and Cuba (1961), and in 1965 sent its own troops into the Dominican Republic.

Other armed clashes include the Arab-Israel War which began in 1948 and broke out again in 1967; the dispute between India and Pakistan over Kashmir; the Indian war against the Nagas; the Russian suppression of the Hungarian insurrection of 1956; the U.N. attack on Katanga in 1960; the Chinese occupation of Tibet and subsequent fighting with Indian troops in 1962; the Russian occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968, and the Iraqi war against Kurdish tribesmen.

This rivalry between the Western and Eastern blocs has been worldwide, with clashes in every continent, from Europe through the Middle East and Far East to Latin America. It will be useful to consider the economic and strategic factors behind the clashes in the various areas.

The antagonism between Russia and the other Allies began even before the second world war was over when it came to dividing the spoils of victory. As the Red Army advanced through Eastern Europe it established puppet regimes in occupied countries. This by no means pleased

the Allies. One of the objects of the war had been to prevent German domination of the Balkans; from their point of view Russian domination was no more desirable. In the first few years after the war U.S.A. and Britain resisted the Russian attempt to set up in Greece a government favourable to Russian aims.

There was, however, a very important difference between the position of the U.S.A. and that of Russia at the end of the war. Russian industrial and agricultural production had suffered terrible damage from the war and the German invasion while America's productive power, already far ahead of Russia's, had gone on during the war to new high levels. American capitalism could win over allies among the devastated nations by the grant of large amounts of aid in food, machinery, and arms. Russia immediately after the war had no such choice. Needing to conserve resources during costly reconstruction, Russia had to employ other weapons to extend its influence, and sought it by the more or less thinly disguised setting up of friendly regimes in former colonial empires and border states by communist party seizure of power; and by the use of occupation troops in the ex-enemy countries. The aims of the two groups of Powers were the same but their methods had to be different. Mounting tension between the two was inevitable. Later on Russia too was able to make big loans and gifts of materials and arms to extend its influence.

One factor which induced Russia to take actions that have alarmed the other Powers has been her desire for cheap oil in order to bold her own as an industrial power. Thus one of the aims of Russia in gaining control of Romania, and moving into the Middle East, was to have access to more oil to supplement her own. This explains too the attempt in 1946 - frustrated by rival American and British oil interests - to impose on Iran, under pressure of the Russian troops still in occupation, an agreement which would have given Russia control of the oil wells in the north.

Russia's need for heavy machinery and electrical equipment to re-establish and expand her industries undoubtedly played a tract in directing her ambitions towards Eastern Germany and Czechoslovakia.

Much of Russia's exports to central and Eastern Europe were timber, foodstuffs, cotton and iron-ore, and in return she received heavy machinery, locomotives, textile machinery and electrical equipment. Where Russia had trade agreements with border countries the entry of West European products into the market was prevented or at least controlled.

These then were, and to some extent still are, the economic factors behind the post-war tension in Europe which reached a climax with the Berlin Blockade of 1948. To this day Berlin remains a danger point. In their attempts to prevent further Russian expansion in Europe, America, Britain and France organised the N.A.T.O. alliance.

The collapse of Japan threw open China and Korea for possible exploitation by one or other of the victors: but the U.S.A. and Britain, with their trading and investment interests in China, had no wish to see Russian influence predominate. By declaring war on Japan in 1945 (after the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima), Russia was able to grab parts of Japan and Korea. However, the U.S.A. was unable to prevent the Chinese aided by Russia from expelling the regime of Chiang Kai-Shek. By 1949 the whole of mainland China as well as North Korea were lost to the Western Powers. When in 1950 the Russian bloc made an attempt to take by force strategically placed South Korea (then American controlled), the Western Powers resisted with their own troops. American troops were sent to aid those of South Korea and later those of Britain and other countries came in under the pretence of being a U.N. force. Chinese 'volunteers' also joined in. The result was a full-scale war which raged for three years with over 1½ million casualties. In the end Chinese expansion was contained. In the years that followed

the U.S.A. set up a ring of bases round China in Japan, Okinawa, Formosa and the Philippines to prevent further expansion which would threaten American domination of the Pacific area.

The position in south-east Asia was somewhat different. Before the second world war most of the area, Indo-China, Malaya and Indonesia, had been parts of the colonial Empires of France, Britain and the Netherlands, respectively. During the war these Powers lost control to Japan. With the defeat of Japan in 1945, the question arose as to who should control the area: the nationalists or the colonial powers. The attempts of France and the Netherlands to regain their areas were resisted by force. When Dutch troops landed in Indonesia in 1946, they were attacked by Indonesian forces. This was an occasion when Japanese prisoners were armed to fight to regain a part of the Dutch Colonial Empire. After further fighting between Dutch and Indonesian troops, Indonesia gained independence in 1949. In South Vietnam, after the defeat of the Japanese, British military forces were for a short period in control and in September 1945 Japanese prisoners were armed and used under British command against the VietMinh, led by Ho Chi-Minh. When Ho Chi-Minh proclaimed an independent republic it was at first accepted by the French but they later tried to regain control. This led to a bloody war which did not end until the French were defeated at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. From 1948-60 British, Australian and New Zealand troops were in Malaya to suppress a Chinese-aided insurrection.

The importance of South-east Asia, strategic and economic, is not difficult to see. Tin, rubber, petroleum, copper and other raw materials are found in the area; Indo-China is important for rice-growing; Singapore is a major port and commercial centre on the vital trade route to the Far East.

American capitalism has long dominated Central and South America and has 'brutally defended this domination in the past. In recent years it has contrived to be less blatant. Its policy has been to arm and train Latin Americans to overthrow hostile regimes. Thus in 1954 when the government of Guatemala threatened the interests of the United Fruit Company the U.S.A. backed an invasion which in this instance was a success. A similar attempt to overthrow the Castro regime in Cuba in 1961 was a failure. In 1965 the U.S.A. returned to its old policy when it openly sent its troops into the Dominican Republic to protect a military dictatorship against a popular revolt.

We can see that the rivalries of capitalism are still leading to wars. This must be the case as long as the system lasts. Events since 1945 have amply confirmed the socialist analysis. The dominant Western Powers have a series of treaties and alliances – NATO, CENTO, SEATO – aimed at preventing Russia and China from expanding further at their expense. In recent years Russia has shown signs of doing a deal with the West but China is still seeking expansion, coming into conflict with Russia and India as well as with the West.

A later war in the South-east of Asia and some conflicts in other areas are dealt with in following chapters.

CHAPTER SIX

War in Vietnam

The territories now known as Vietnam, along with Laos and Cambodia, belonged before the second world war to the French colonial empire of Indo-China. For most of the last thirty years the region has never been free from war and civil war.

From 1940 to 1945 it was occupied by Japanese troops and used as a base for military operations against the Western powers. Following the defeat of Japan the French spent eight years, at a cost of 40,000 dead and thousands of millions of pounds trying unsuccessfully to regain control. They were given American aid in this, in return for accepting American policy in Europe. French troops finally withdrew in 1956.

Under an international agreement a general election was to have been held in 1956 to end the temporary separation of North and South Vietnam; but the election was never held and the two governments have remained in being and at war with each other, the North backed by Russia and China and the South by America. The American interest has been described by Sir Robert Thompson, who was head of the British Advisory Mission in Vietnam and subsequently an adviser to President Nixon:

"The war in Vietnam has never been solely a Vietnam war. It has all along been a war for Indo-China, to decide the succession to French power in that area" (*Financial Times*, 6 May 1970).

America's direct intervention began in 1955, with an agreement to help train and organise the South Vietnam government's armed forces; but as the war and civil war developed there were eventually 550,000 American army, navy and air force personnel operating in the war, as well as another 50,000 troops from Australia, New Zealand and South Korea.

The British Labour government did not send operational troops but gave general support to American policy and provided aid in the form of arms and supplies and by helping to train South Vietnamese and American troops at the British jungle warfare school in South Malaya (*Sunday Times*, 16 October 1966).

Militarily the war was more destructive than the Korean War 1950-53. At its peak it was costing the American government £1,250 million a year. American casualties to end of 1969 totalled about 40,000 dead and 260,000 wounded or missing. Losses among the North Vietnam forces and those of the Vietcong, the military wing of the National Liberation Front, were reported to have been much heavier.

Because the American command relied heavily on bombing raids on towns and supply lines and because much of the fighting was in South Vietnam the heaviest losses were suffered by South and North Vietnamese civilians. According to Senator Edward Kennedy a quarter of a million South Vietnamese civilians were killed by South Vietnam and American air raids and artillery barrages, and the number of civilians killed or wounded in the whole of Vietnam reached a million (*Daily Mail*, 3 December 1969).

When Vietcong troops penetrated the small South Vietnam town of Ben Tre the American military authorities decided to drive them out by raining fire on all the buildings and streets where Vietcong troops were believed to be. An Associated Press correspondent quoted an American major as saying: "It became necessary to destroy the town to save it" (*Daily Express*,

8 February 1968). Out of a population of 35,000, a least 500 and possibly 1000 civilians were killed - "we will never know for sure", said an American commander.

The correspondent described it as "a city destroyed by napalm, rockets and bombs in an attack ordered by the U.S.A. troops still fighting inside it".

The war was fought with indiscriminate savagery by both sides. American journalists brought to light deliberate and premeditated murders of South Vietnam civilians, men, women and children by American service men. One of these was at 'Pinkville' (the village of My Lai) where the victims numbered hundreds. That this 'massacre' took place was admitted by President Nixon. Eventually a number of servicemen were tried and convicted. One of them, an American Marine, who was sentenced to life imprisonment, was found guilty of the murder of twelve women and children (*Times*, 22 June 1970).

The comment of George Brown, then Deputy Leader of the British Labour Party and former Minister in the Labour Government, on the Pinkville Massacre was that "the Americans should stop weeping and get on with the Vietnam war. And instead of just looking for United States atrocities the British Labour Party ought to be thinking about the threat to freedom if the Communists win" (*Evening Standard*, 21 November 1969).

One of the places hit by the full force of war was the South Vietnam city of Hué. When it was overrun by North Vietnam and Vietcong forces in February 1968, in addition to loss of life in the fighting, some 2500 civilians were known to have been murdered by the Vietcong. Then came the American and South Vietnam counter-attack with unnumbered further civilian casualties. Gavin Young, reporting in the *Observer* (3 March 1968), wrote:

"No one knows how many civilians were killed, perhaps they never will. Some were killed deliberately by the Vietcong, others by American bombing and mortaring."

As he put it, the North Vietnam and American commands between them, "in the name of the people's salvation . . . have killed the flower of Vietnamese cities".

Both sides claimed that the war had popular support but both rigidly suppressed movements for peace and both had to use force in the form of conscription to compel unwilling workers and peasants to fight. North and South Vietnam alike lost tens of thousands by desertion.

Evasion of the call-up was common in America and the American Senate Armed Services Committee reported in March 1969 that 53,360 American servicemen had deserted between the middle of 1967 and the middle of 1968, and 155,536 went absent without leave (*Times*, 8 March 1969).

Massive demonstrations against the continuance of the war took place throughout American cities and in Britain, Australia, New Zealand, South Vietnam and elsewhere. Popular opposition to the war in America strengthened the hands of those who, on military, financial, or other grounds, opposed American intervention: and President Nixon eventually modified government policy by undertaking the progressive withdrawal of American forces, half to be out by May 1971. This did not however mean the end of the commitment to support the South Vietnam government and provide military aid to other governments in the region, in the hope of achieving in Vietnam the kind of stalemate arrived at in Korea, with the maintenance of a continuing division between North and South.

Why are America and the other powers so much concerned with Vietnam and the rest of Indo-China?

In part the attraction is that which drew French capitalism to Indo-China half a century and more ago - as a source of food and raw materials, as a market for exports, and as a cheap labour field for profitable investment in the development of mineral resources and manufacturing industry. South Korea, with its present booming industry and trade and the big inflow of capital from America, Japan and elsewhere, mirrors what the Powers may hope to achieve also in Vietnam. Russian and Chinese interest is the same as that of the other Powers.

What is however of greater importance is Indo-China's strategic position. Bordering China in the north its thousand-mile coast line faces American forces in the Philippines and extends southwards towards Malaysia, Indonesia and Australia. The balance of power in the Pacific would be shifted in favour of whichever of the Powers gained effective control of Indo-China.

The Socialist Party of Great Britain does not support either side in the war or any of the capitalist or state capitalist Powers involved. The interest of the workers and peasants in all the countries is in securing peace, not in sacrificing their lives to promote the expansionist aims of one or other of the Powers.

Among those who demonstrated against the war are some who are not in favour simply of the unconditional ending of hostilities but seek the victory of North Vietnam and the Vietcong on the alleged ground that theirs is a movement of liberation. This claim is baseless. From the working class and socialist point of view there are no essential differences between the economic structure of state capitalist Russia, China and North Vietnam and the capitalism of the Western Powers. The interest of the working class calls for world-wide class unity against all their exploiters.

The Nigerian Civil War

History is full of examples of nations which, having been subject to foreign rule, succeed in expelling the foreigners and achieving independence. Invariably the movement for independence claims to be a national, democratic one, representing the interests of the people as a whole against the foreign occupying Power. Viewed in that superficial way the struggle comes to an end when the occupying Power withdraws; but in practice that is only the beginning of a new struggle to determine which section of the home ruling class shall dominate the new government.

Sometimes the clash of interests is so intense that, with independence, the movement disintegrates into irreconcilable factions. This happened in India where - accompanied by enormous loss of life in Hindu-Moslem conflicts - it resulted in the formation of two separate states, Pakistan and India which, before many years had passed, were at open war.

In other instances a compromise solution has been attempted by setting up a federal form of constitution in which the powers of the central government are limited and the rival interests seek to achieve their ends through control of regional governments, using this as a stepping stone to gaining complete or partial control of the central government and altering the constitution. To this end the rival interests exploit regional differences of industry, trade, language and religion to build up popular support for their demands. This is what has been behind the electoral battles, assassinations and civil war in Nigeria in the past ten years.

At the same time the British ruling class were manoeuvring to protect and expand their investments in the country and to resist the efforts of the Russian and other governments to extend their own influence.

In Nigeria the problem was complicated by strong tribal loyalties in the different regions as well as by all the other factors. Among scores of tribal and language groups the largest are the Moslem Hausa in the north and the Christian Yoruba and Ibo in the south. At the establishment of the Federation of Nigeria in 1960, on the withdrawal of British colonial rule, some observers forecast early disintegration. The newly independent Nigeria was divided into three regions. Northern, Western and Eastern, together with the federal territory of Lagos, each region being self-governing but with important overall powers reserved to the Federal government. After bitter struggles between regional interests and political parties to get control of the Federal government or influence its policies, a group of officers staged a *coup d'état* on 15 January 1966 and assassinated the Federal Prime Minister and other Federal and Regional ministers. This revolt was crushed within a few days by Major-General Ironsi, head of the army, who assumed supreme power and abolished all political parties and tribal associations. His military government replaced the regions by 'provinces' and changed the name to the Republic of Nigeria as a mark of the end of federation. The Ironsi regime was itself overthrown in July 1966 by a new revolt led by Lieut.-Colonel Gowon who restored the old federal constitution but, a year later, divided the country into twelve states in order to undermine the power of the regions. This move was immediately challenged, on 30 May 1967, by Lieut.-Colonel Ojukwu, military governor of the Eastern states who announced secession and the formation of a breakaway republic of Biafra, largely peopled by the Ibo. The Mid-west state also broke away.

A major economic factor, behind the breakaway movement concerned the division of the revenues from the rapidly growing oil industry. Oil exports had grown from £11½ million in 1961 to £93 million in 1966, representing a third of all Nigerian exports; and three-fifths of all oil production was centred in the Eastern region on which Biafra was based. Hence the Biafran claim that "each region must have control over its own resources". By far the biggest oil group

was Shell-BP in which the Federal government has a fifty per cent interest and in which the British government is interested as shareholder in British Petroleum. American, French and Italian oil companies worked smaller concessions. Once the war had started trouble arose over the conflicting demands of the Federal government and the Biafran government, each demanding payment of oil revenues from Shell-BP. At meetings called to seek a compromise the British government took part, along with Shell-BP and the Federal government.

The Russian and British governments backed the Nigerian Federation and supplied them with arms while the Biafran government was given support by the French government and obtained arms directly or indirectly from France, Portugal and Sweden.

One of the arguments urged by the Wilson Labour government for supporting the Federation and denying support to Biafra was that to stand aside would allow Russian imperialism to strengthen its position in Africa. Some Labour MPs strongly backed Biafra on the ground that it was an independence movement resisting the encroachments of the Federal government and its oil company backers; they ignored the fact that rival oil interests were wooing the Biafran government in the hope of taking over the oil concessions from the existing holders - Shell-BP and others. The eventual victory of the Federal troops in January 1970 was soon followed by the announcement that Shell-BP were spending £66 million on big developments of oil production. This is now at record levels and Nigeria is among the big oil producing countries of the world.

One of the causes of the intense bitterness of the war was the belief, encouraged by the Biafran leaders, that a Federal aim was the total extermination of the Ibo.

The civilian population suffered from air raids from both sides, though in the later stages of the war it was mainly civilians in Biafra who were victims of the Federal government's Russian bombers.

All pleas by the United Nations, the Pope, and various organisations for agreement to stop all arms supplies to both sides were ignored. The Federal government relied largely on its ability to stop food supplies to Biafra and thus starve them into submission though in the end the victory was also a military one, brought to a head when the Biafran leader Lieut.-Colonel Ojukwu fled the country.

The Biafran government made some attempt to rally 'left-wing' support by representing itself as a 'progressive' movement. On 1 June 1969 it issued the Ahiara Declaration proclaiming that the Biafran republic would be égalitarian and that all property would belong to the community. This aroused opposition in Biafran ruling class circles and essential parts of the declaration were soon withdrawn by the Biafran government (*Times*. 27 January 1970).

Reliable figures of the death roll are unobtainable but all accounts agree that the overwhelming number of victims were civilians in Biafra. A World Council of Churches report put the probable deaths from starvation as early as October 1968 at over a million (*Times*. 19 October 1968).

The Socialist Party of Great Britain did not support either side, holding that the workers and peasant farmers had no interest at stake in the capitalist rivalries within Nigeria or in the sordid intervention of Russia, France, Britain and other capitalist powers.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Israel and the Middle East

To Zionists who for many years struggled to win a country in which they could escape persecution, and to Arab nationalists who regarded the creation of a Jewish state as an invasion of their homeland, the continued existence of Israel is the central issue in the recurring hostilities. To the Powers which keep the ferment going by pouring in financial and military aid the fate of Israel is only part of a larger conflict concerned with the control of the Middle East.

When, by United Nations resolution, a Jewish state was set up in Palestine in 1948, hundreds of thousands of Jews fleeing from the memories of persecution came to Israel to join those already there.

This was fiercely resisted by the Arab countries and the new state of Israel was immediately attacked by Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. The invading forces were defeated but since then there has never been peace, the situation being embittered by the creation of a new army of refugees - the 600,000 Arabs who fled from Israel when the war broke out - many of them still destitute and homeless.

In terms of Middle-Eastern physical resources there is ample room for Arabs and Israelis to live in amity but the realities of capitalist rivalries make such a solution impossible even if some sort of frontier settlement is reached.

Through its situation at the cross-roads between Asia, Africa and the Mediterranean the Middle East throughout history has attracted the attention of conquerors - from the Roman Caesars to Napoleon and all through the nineteenth century, with Britain and France wresting control from Turkey. Events which added to the importance of the Middle East were the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the discovery of oil in Iran (formerly known as Persia), Iraq, Arabia and the Persian Gulf.

In the heyday of the British Empire, Middle East naval bases and the Suez Canal were vital links in British communications with India, Australia, New Zealand and colonies in the Far East. Russia was also interested and early in this century Northern Persia was recognised as a Russian sphere of interest and Southern Persia and the Gulf as a British sphere. Later on American oil interests became increasingly involved. With the decline of the British Empire, America and Russia have become the chief antagonists seeking to dominate the Middle East and its resources.

After years of intermittent hostilities following the 1948 conflict open war was resumed in 1956 and again in 1967. Britain and France were associated with Israel in the invasion of Egypt in 1956, but were forced to withdraw under pressure from both America and Russia. Britain then had to withdraw also from its base which dominated Suez.

The canal {which was closed in 1967 when Israeli forces occupied the East Bank} has lost some of its importance because much oil is now transported in tankers too large to pass through it. At the same time more overland oil pipelines have been built or planned. One of these crosses Israel from the port of Elath {which gives a sea link through the Red Sea and thence to the Persian Gulf}, to the Mediterranean. The canal is of major importance to Russia as a link between Black Sea ports and the Indian Ocean. Middle East oil resources have retained their importance and Russia is increasingly involved as its navy and air fleets have moved into the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf.

With the rise to power of capitalist-nationalist governments in Middle Eastern countries, the 1964 British Labour Government decided to withdraw from many Middle East and Far East

bases. Factors behind the withdrawal policy were the saving of money and the development of long distance air transport enabling troops to be sent from England to Malaya with only two stops, at Bahrain in the Persian Gulf, and Gan in the Indian Ocean. The policy of wholesale withdrawal was not accepted by the Tory Government elected in 1970. One Tory spokesman, Julian Amery, M.P., pointed out that as Britain withdrew Russia had moved in and established naval bases in Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Aden, as well as having military advisers in Libya after a new government had expelled American and British air bases. One of the bases taken over by Russia was that at Khormaksar, Aden, "once the R.A.F.'s busiest overseas airfield" (*Daily Telegraph*, 10 April 1970).

America as well as Russia is interested in Middle East oil and President Nixon, in his statement on American foreign policy for the 1970s declared:

"The United States would view any effort of the Soviet Union to seek predominance in the Middle East as a matter of grave concern."

American concern increased then Russian troops were established in Egypt.

The policies of all the Powers towards Israel and the Arab countries have at times been confused and uncertain. The British Labour Party has its pro-Israel and pro-Arab groups. The American government has had to try to keep on good terms with the Arab countries, in which American oil companies have large investments, while at the same time supporting Israel against Russian pressure; also Israel has many supporters among the Jewish population in America. French government policy also switched from one side to the other.

Russian policy has undergone several changes. Before the second world war it was Russia's policy (echoed by the British Communist Party) to back the Arabs and oppose Zionism which was denounced as an instrument of British imperialism. In 1948 this was dropped, and Russian support was given to the Zionist aim of creating the state of Israel. Later there was a reversion to the old policy of support for Egypt and her allies.

The Arab countries are loosely joined together in the Arab League; but although the League can on occasion present a show of unity, as for example in its attitude towards Israel, this does not mean that the rivalries of the member governments cease to operate. Indeed one of the objects of the League is to mediate in disputes which threaten war between them.

One such outbreak of hostilities took place between the forces of the South Yemen and Saudi Arabia at the end of November 1969. Planes, tanks and infantry were involved and there were numerous casualties.

The dispute had all the usual trappings, with claims by the South Yemen based on a fourth century frontier demarcation and the counter claim by Saudi Arabia that their definition of the frontier is the correct one and that they are fighting to keep 'international communism' out of the area (*Evening Standard*, 5 December 1969).

The real cause of the dispute turned on the discovery of what is described as an underground 'sea of oil'. American geologists employed by Saudi Arabia were first in the field but were quickly followed by Russians, working for South Yemen, who confirmed the discovery; Saudi Arabia expelled the Russians and the troops moved in.

In September 1970 the Arab countries were divided over the question of opening peace negotiations with Israel. Fighting broke out between Jordan, backed by Egypt - both governments favoured the negotiations - and the Palestine guerrilla forces of the Popular Front

for the Liberation of Palestine, backed by the government of Syria. In the fighting many thousands were killed or wounded.

Israel and many of the Arab countries have governments which claim to be socialist; a claim which is denied by their rabid nationalism, and that of the so-called socialist parties which support them and the wars they wage. All the countries in the Middle East are capitalist states exhibiting all the evils of the capitalist system.

National Liberation Wars

Socialists are opposed to war and to all that war represents. It is sometimes suggested that for national liberation wars this anti-war attitude should be abandoned. This view ultimately derives from the theory formulated by Lenin that the workers of the countries with colonial dependencies and the colonial peoples have a common enemy in imperialism and should therefore co-operate against it; the loss of their colonies would weaken the imperialist ruling class and so make it easier for the working class to overthrow them.

Before examining objections to this doctrine it is necessary to recognise what imperialism is. The assumption that some powers are by nature imperialist and others not disregards the nature of capitalism. All capitalist states are expansionist, seeking to extend the industrial, trading and financial interests of the ruling class; from the most powerful to the smallest. What distinguishes one from another is the amount of military force at their disposal. Israel and surrounding Arab states each seeking to encroach on the territories of the other are no less imperialist than the great colonial powers of the past and present.

It follows from this that the ending of a particular colonial empire, while leaving world capitalism intact, may change the direction but in no way reduces the sum total of actual and potential imperialism.

Events have proved how wrong Lenin was: the granting of political independence to colonial territories, whether under peaceful or violent pressure, has not weakened imperialism generally. It has merely altered the balance of power between the various states. In South-east Asia American imperialism gained at the expense of French imperialism; in Cuba Russian imperialism gained at the expense of American, and if North Vietnam secures control of the whole country Chinese imperialism will gain. Many of the national liberation movements have been mere pawns in the hands of rival imperialisms even before they have won. Where they have won, independence has benefited neither the colonial peoples nor the workers of the former colony-holding countries. For it is not the workers who are liberated but only a minority who impose their rule and take over from the foreign governments the role of exploiters. Once in power this minority finds sooner or later that its independence too is illusory; it is forced to compromise with one or other of the imperialist powers, even perhaps the one they fought against. Cuba and Algeria are cases in point, and history is full of examples of liberated countries becoming imperialist themselves, as with America, China and South Africa.

The fact that most of the wars in the past hundred years have included national liberation wars, or have resulted in the setting up of new nations, has been used as evidence for the view that nationalism is the cause or main cause of war. At the 'peace' settlement after the first world war the statesmen who recast the frontiers of Europe proclaimed as their guide the principle of making the boundaries of each state coincide with the nationality of the inhabitants so that there would be no more national minorities complaining of oppression by alien rulers. They could not have achieved this result if they had wanted to for in many parts of the world, Eastern Europe in particular, there is such intermingling of language, religion and other familiar marks of nationality that it would be impossible to separate them. Poland, Russia, Romania, Czechoslovakia and Hungary were some of the countries whose frontiers were subsequently redrawn because the first attempt had failed.

In a socialist society there will be no attempt to impose uniformity, but so-called nationalist movements under capitalism are both a menace and an illusion. They are a menace because they enable an interested ruling class to use them to provoke antagonism towards other groups

and thus provide fertile ground for capitalist interests to work up support for war. Nationalism itself is not the cause of war but it is exploited to give cover to the naked rivalries of capitalism.

Nationalism is an illusion because while capitalism lasts, the powers, great and small, dare not allow themselves to be weakened by giving real freedom of action to any group of citizens. The governments, in defending capitalist interests, are all opposed to the development of internationalism among the working class of the world, and equally opposed to so-called national minorities which resist conforming to centralised rule and conscription for the armed forces. Theoretically the minorities are often supposed to enjoy the right to secede, but no ruling class in fact willingly permits this where it conflicts with important economic or strategic considerations. The American civil war of the eighteen-sixties, provoked by the clash of economic interests between the slave-owning, free-trade southern states and the industrialised, protectionist northern ones, was fought by the North to prevent the secession of the South. The refusal of the Czechoslovak government to allow the Sudeten Germans to join Germany before World War II is another example. Here the major factor was that it meant the surrender of a relatively strong frontier line and the exposure of the country to easy invasion from Germany. In Russia there is supposed to be freedom to secede for the many national groups but, in fact, nationalist movements are suppressed; and when the Crimean Tartar population were alleged to have sided with the German invaders in the second world war they were deprived of their status under the Constitution and forcibly transferred from the Black Sea region to a distant part of Russian central Asia. The Volga Germans suffered the same fate and secessionist propaganda by Ukrainian nationalists is forcibly suppressed.

It was pointed out earlier in this chapter that nationalism is not the cause of war. There are in fact no purely nationalist movements. Invariably the nationalist sentiment is mixed with economic factors and made use of by the class that has an interest to serve by achieving independence; and independence means not the emancipation of the exploited section of the population but a mere change of masters.

How secondary is the importance of nationalism is shown by the history of the subject groups that have successfully achieved so-called independence and made good their position in the capitalist world. Given the opportunity they follow the normal expansionism of capitalism irrespective of the wishes and sentiments of other national groups inside their frontier or outside. Italy,

Czechoslovakia, Poland, Germany, Belgium and Holland were all at some time subject to another power and all after have come into conflict with minority groups incorporated in their territories. Outside Europe there are examples of the Nagas in India, the Arabs in Israel, the Kurds in Iraq, the Indians in Ceylon, the Chinese in Malaya and many others. In none of these countries any more than in the rest of the capitalist world has the exploited class, the workers, secured emancipation.

It is difficult to find any country that is not a mixture of language and religious and cultural groups, and in most of them one or other of these minorities complains of being oppressed. On the other hand the idea of independence of small nations is a myth. The capitalist world has reached a stage in which, for economic reasons, small countries cannot hold their own; all are being driven into one or other of the big economic and military groups. The small countries that survive without formally belonging to a larger group have only a nominal independence. They are tolerated because it suits the larger powers which sometimes themselves arrange for such neutrality as in the case of Austria. In all important questions they must frame their policies and adapt their industries and trade agreements to the needs of their more powerful neighbours.

We see then that national liberation wars and nationalism are not movements which socialists can support. National liberation wars are essentially the struggle of a would-be new ruling class

against colonial rulers; once in power this new ruling class continues the exploitation of the workers.

The Socialist Party rejects the argument that capitalist national movements in the less developed areas of the world should be supported as a stage towards Socialism. Capitalism now dominates the world and it has raised the productive capacity of society to a level which makes capitalism's replacement by world Socialism a practical possibility now. Workers everywhere should be struggling for the immediate establishment of a socialist system of society.

The Russia-China Quarrel

When with Russian aid, the Chinese Communist Party came to power in 1949, the two countries became allies; linked, the governments claimed, by bonds of friendship and common Marxist-Leninist aims, and of mutual interest against the Western powers.

The Russian government contracted to provide loans, plant, machinery and technicians to help China build up its industry, trade and armed forces, including a specific agreement to develop the Chinese atomic bomb. In return Russia relied on the resources of the Chinese province of Sinkiang as its chief source of uranium for nuclear weapons and as an important source of oil and non-ferrous metals. Militarily the alliance enabled Russia to leave its 4000-mile Chinese frontier thinly guarded so that Russian forces could be concentrated in Europe facing the Western powers.

On the surface all seemed to be harmonious, and the Communist parties scoffed at the idea that this idyllic coming together of friends and allies could ever be disturbed; but within a short space of time the 'unthinkable' happened, and now for several years Russia and China have waged their own 'cold war'; interrupted repeatedly by military clashes on the frontier, some of them of considerable extent and with the loss of many lives.

These later developments have been shattering for the Communist parties all over the world. Those of their members who really believed that Russia and China were socialist countries, guided by socialist principles, confidently dismissed any possibility that the forces which make for war between capitalist countries could have any application to the relationship between Russia and China. At first they denounced the reports of dissensions as 'capitalist lies', and explained that all that was happening was arguments about the interpretation of socialist principles, conducted in a fraternal atmosphere. Finally, when the armed clashes were admitted by both governments and could be denied no longer, the Communist parties split into pro-Chinese and pro-Russian factions bitterly denouncing each other. They were all of them completely unable - within the framework of their proclaimed belief that Russia and China are socialist countries - to offer a rational explanation of the threatening war. Most of the supposed authorities on Russia-China affairs outside the Communist parties were equally unable to give a credible explanation. They were content to accept that it was a dispute about theory; but, as one writer put it, David Floyd (*Daily Telegraph*, 2 November 1960), "Is it credible that Moscow and Peking are ready to risk losing the enormous advantages that accrue to both of them from their alliance just for the sake of their understanding of Lenin?" He described the theoretical disagreements as an "excuse for a dispute which has other and more tangible roots. The public disputes tell us nothing about the true nature of the quarrel, which it is indeed their function to conceal rather than illuminate".

For Floyd the quarrel is "a battle of empires" similar to other armed clashes that have led to wars between rival powers.

To the Socialist Party of Great Britain the Russia-China quarrel presents no mystery. Apart from the fact that these two expanding capitalist powers falsely represent themselves to be socialist, the conflict conforms to the way in which all capitalist conflicts originate, right up from the basic causes to the propaganda use made of historical factors and national prejudices to create hatred and war hysteria among the population.

It is almost an axiom in the relations between any two capitalist powers that if one of them, having been internally divided and militarily weak, achieves centralised government and rapid military growth, it will use its strength to shift frontiers to its economic and strategic advantage.

This has been the story of recent decades in the relations between these two great powers in mainland Asia. China, with its population of 700 million against Russia's 250 million, looks north to Russian Siberia, a vast region of great actual or potential wealth but sparsely populated - a mere 20 million in the Siberian regions adjacent to China. This hitherto little-developed territory is immensely rich in raw materials and "may well become the economic centre of the Soviet Union in the near future. Three-fifths of the country's ore lies in Siberia, three-quarters of its coal, and some four-fifths of its peat. It seems that central Siberia's rivers alone could provide 40 per cent of Russia's total hydro-electric power" (*Times Review of Industry*, December 1964). One region, the Soviet Republic of Kazakhstan, is described by a Russian authority as "an enormous treasure hoard of valuable minerals, among them iron-ore, coal, chrome, manganese, bauxite, copper and gold" (*The Times*, 2 March 1970).

Great efforts have latterly been made by the Russian government to speed the industrial development of Siberia and increase its population. Air and road communications are expanding and a new 2000-mile railway is being built from near Lake Baikal to the Russian maritime provinces which border the Sea of Japan. In addition discussions have been going on with Japanese industrialists aimed at joint Russian-Japanese industrial ventures in Eastern Siberia, providing exports for Japanese heavy industry.

The frontier problem is complicated by the fact that basic population in the frontier regions is neither Russian nor Chinese. Chinese Sinkiang {formerly known as East Turkestan) has seen several revolts of Turkic nationalists, and the Russian government now permits a Free Turkestan movement to operate from Russian soil aiming at the 'liberation of Sinkiang' from China and the union of Turkic people there with their fellows on the Russian side of the border.

The Russian government has also strengthened its position in the nominally independent state of Mongolia (which borders on Sinkiang) by a treaty allowing Russian troops to be stationed there.

The Chinese allege that the first serious breach of the earlier good relations was the result of a Russian demand that they be granted complete control of Chinese Sinkiang, and failing to get this the Russian government in 1959 tore up its agreement to help China with its nuclear weapons. (Since then the Chinese have developed their own bomb.)

Whatever the circumstances it was not long before Russia ceased to give industrial aid, withdrew its technicians and cut down trade.

Hostile acts multiplied, including mutual charges of molesting and beating-up diplomats, the publication of a Chinese map showing big areas of Russian held territory as Chinese and, above all, the allegations of frontier violations. According to Russian reports there were 5000 of these in 1962 alone.

When in 1962 China and India were at war over disputed frontiers, Russia helped India with weapons and planes.

The mutual abuse was continuous and unrestricted. Russia was accused of plotting with America to encircle China, and at various times of lining-up with Chiang Kai-shek, Yugoslavia, India, Japan and Britain against China.

Russia countered with charges that China was seeking to prolong the Vietnam war and that China was lining up with the U.S.A. and Germany against Russia.

From Russia came abuse likening Mao to Hitler and accusing him of encouraging a war of coloureds against whites: The Chinese countered with the charge that Russia is a "Hitlerite dictatorship pursuing power politics and gunboat diplomacy on a world-wide scale".

There were mutual accusations of imperialism and capitalism. Russia was described in one outburst as a land where "Red capitalists . . . grind the faces of the poor".

In 1964 the Chinese Communist party published an English edition of a pamphlet, *On Khrushchev's Phoney Communism* (Foreign Language Press, Peking). It charged the Russian leader with having "greatly hastened the growth of the forces of capitalism in Russia" . . . "of revisionist policies serving the interests of the bourgeoisie", of applying in Russian industry "the principle of profit", and of "colluding with U.S. imperialism".

The pamphlet accused Khrushchev of representing the interests of a privileged group against the interests of workers and peasants:

"The members of the privileged stratum appropriate the fruits of the Soviet people's labour and pocket incomes that are dozens or even a hundred times those of the average Soviet worker and peasant. They not only secure high incomes in the form of high royalties and a great variety of personal subsidies, but also use their privileged position to appropriate public property by graft and bribery. Completely divorced from the working people of the Soviet Union, they live the parasitical and decadent life of the bourgeoisie".

In the 1914 war it was customary for Allied war propaganda to call the Germans 'Huns' as part of the theme that West European civilisation had to be defended against the German 'barbarians'. Simultaneously German propaganda claimed to be defending European civilisation against the Russian 'barbarians': the Hitler regime used the same theme; now a prominent Russian poet has used the term 'Huns' to describe the Chinese 'barbarians'!

Underlying the Chinese case for moving frontiers the history of earlier centuries was brought into play. Russian history included expansion by war in all directions; to the Baltic in wars with Sweden, to the Black Sea in wars with Turkey, to the West, first in the division of Poland and in 1945 in the shifting of the Polish frontiers westwards. In the East it took the form of the drive to the Pacific through Siberia and through territories claimed by the rulers of China. By treaties in 1858 and 1860 large areas were ceded to Russia, among them the Maritime Provinces with Vladivostok at the southern tip; this cut off China from the Sea of Japan. The Chinese complain that at that time they were at war with Britain and France and were too weak to resist Russian pressure.

The growing military power of China and the threat this offers to Russia's frontiers has helped to bring about a big shift in relationships with other powers, notably America. Needing to move troops East the Russian government has sought to lessen tension with America and America's allies so that these troops could safely be taken out of Europe. Hence the discussions over banning nuclear weapons and over Berlin, and the treaty with the government of Western Germany. Simultaneously the Chinese also opened discussions with America, no doubt hoping thereby to reduce the danger to themselves of too close a relationship between America and Russia.

What will be the final outcome of the Russia-China quarrel remains to be seen. What can be said now is that it is clear for all to see that the relationship between Russia and China follows in almost every detail the relationships between other capitalist powers whose interests clash.

Futile Efforts to Prevent War

Socialists hold that the menace of war cannot be done away with while its cause, the capitalist system, remains. Non-socialists generally reject this view. Many of them agree that international friction exists but deny that it need culminate in war. It is possible, they say, to take action which will stop war.

They have in mind action by governments or action by organisations seeking to influence or dictate to governments. Those who propose action by governments envisage international assemblies such as the United Nations; those who propose non-governmental action look to strikes by the organised workers, or international action by pacifists and others pledged not to support war. Either way any action, to be effective, would have to be international. No one can seriously believe in the practicability of getting one government alone or the population of one country alone to abandon armaments and trust that the rest of the capitalists will cease to be predatory.

As far as international action by governments is concerned we have seen it at work in the League of Nations between the wars and in the United Nations; which means that we have seen that it does not work. The governments that meet in the United Nations have behind them national capitalist groups which have real and vital conflicts of interest. The conflicts do not disappear when they get together in a large group any more than when the diplomats of rival Powers get together in a small group. The League of Nations was at one time labelled the league of bandits; the United Nations is no different.

In the old League of Nations the French government used to propose the establishment of an international force which could be used to 'police' the world, and especially Europe. This conception of the League as a policeman fitted in with the policy of French governments of trying to preserve the Versailles Peace Settlement in Europe, that is to say a strong France and a weak Germany. This proposal was never acted upon as it conflicted with the interests of the other Powers, Britain in particular which, in accordance with traditional policy, wanted a strong Germany to counteract a strong France. Although it has often been suggested that the United Nations should have a permanent international force at its disposal, this has not been seriously taken up by the major Powers. On occasions they have, it is true, agreed to send U.N. 'observers' to trouble-spots to preserve 'law and order' and prevent the spread of disorder; this serves to keep the present balance of world power and facilitate peaceful trading. There is not the slightest chance of the major powers agreeing to arm the U.N. with a powerful force that could one day be used against themselves. But even if they did they would be unable to agree as to how and when it should be used. The U.N. may be of use to the major Powers as an instrument to stop the quarrels of the lesser Powers getting out of hand, but that is all. The whole idea of governmental co-operation to maintain peace and prevent war is a delusion in the world of international rivalry that is capitalism. In this world the policies and the relative strengths of the Powers are continually changing.

Sometimes co-operation, sometimes conflict are in the interest of the various Powers. Even if America and Russia got together and tried to impose peace on the rest of the world this would still be no guarantee of peace. Economic development would strengthen rival imperialisms which would challenge the ruling Powers by force if necessary. The fate of the Test Ban Treaty of 1962 provides a pointer. The three major nuclear powers, the U.S.A., Russia and Britain, were aiming to ensure that they kept their monopoly of nuclear weapons. The French and Chinese governments saw through the hypocrisy of appeals to stop "the spread of nuclear weapons" and went ahead with their nuclear armaments. There is now strong pressure in India to do the same.

At one time the Labour Party had many ideas about how it was going to use government power to press for peace and disarmament. But the Labour government which entered office in 1945 failed to introduce any improvement in the conduct of international affairs. Their intentions were above reproach, and they started with at least a superficial understanding "that capitalist society contains tendencies which may lead to war". They thought they could neutralise those tendencies, partly by making what they believed to be a friendly approach to other Powers, and partly by putting their trust in the United Nations. But what happened?

The Labour Government said that they would not enter any group - but they joined NATO. They would seek disarmament - but began rearmament, including nuclear weapons. They would remove Russian suspicions - but not for a century were relationships worse than when the Labour Government left office in 1951. They were hardly any better under the Labour governments between 1964 and 1970.

If we seek the cause of the failure of Labour governments to remove international antagonisms and to make war preparations unnecessary we find it in the fact that they, like all other governments, are carrying on the capitalist system. Their early optimism was due partly no doubt to the way they had accepted the illusion that the world really could be united in the U.N.; but mainly because they had never properly understood what the capitalist social system is and why it necessarily creates international antagonisms. They saw no contradiction between pursuing a determined exports drive to capture markets from other groups and a policy of peace and friendship!

When they took on the responsibility of conducting the foreign policy of British capitalism it mattered little what were their hopes and promises. They were the government, but events and capitalist needs took control of their policies. They were compelled, unless they resigned, to pursue that were bound to engender world antagonisms.

Today the leadership of the Labour Party has openly abandoned nearly all of the earlier illusions. These illusions however are still entertained by many rank-and-file members who talk of morality and place their trust in the U.N. and disarmament conferences. Such conferences are futile too. The first of them, summoned by the Tsar to discuss "the maintenance of international peace and a possible reduction of the excessive armaments which weigh upon all nations", met at the Hague in 1899. Fifteen years later Europe was at war. A grand world Disarmament Conference opened in Geneva in 1932 - to the sound of the Japanese attack on China! Today this futile pretence is still kept up with the ten-nation disarmament conference, once again at Geneva. Disarmament within capitalism is impossible; no government could agree to it for to do so would be to commit economic suicide. The necessities of capitalism force governments to maintain and develop their armed forces. Within capitalism there is no sure road to peace however sincere may be those who cherish that illusion.

When we turn to the other kind of action which it is suggested could stop war we find it equally useless or impracticable. We can admit the proposition that *if* the soldiers of all countries refused to fight and *if* the workers refused to work for war then a war could not take place; but simultaneous international action of this kind presupposes both effective international organisation and mutual trust, neither of which exists. How can workers who would not vote for Socialism and who are in the main not at all internationally minded have sufficient confidence in the workers abroad to risk taking the drastic step of defying their own government? If the workers of all countries had reached the stage of being able to think and act internationally they would have shown it already in their votes at elections. Here we are considering action to prevent the governments from moving into war, which means that the workers would be asked to strike against the governments many of them had voted for. Workers may in peacetime consider taking concerted action against war but by the time the situation has developed to the critical point of war being imminent, strike action against the

government would no longer appear as action to *stop* war but as action to weaken the government and bring about defeat in the war. Moreover, by the time war was about to happen, nine-tenths of the people who in the abstract thought themselves to be determined opponents of war would have been won over to reluctant support of the actual war as presented to them in the propaganda of their own government. They would feel that war was unavoidable and that the case of their own government was at least as good as that of the enemy and that it is better to win a war than to lose it. This is what happened in 1914 with the much-vaunted proposal for a General Strike against war. It happened again in 1939 when thousands broke their 'pledge' never to support another war.

This question of international confidence among the workers is a vital one and the experience of past wars shows how impossible it is to create confidence where socialist conviction is lacking. The workers of one country will naturally not have confidence that the workers of another country will defy the government of that country if they know that those workers have supported it and helped to place it in power. The only people who could appeal to workers abroad and expect to be trusted would be workers who had consistently, year in year out, opposed their own capitalist class and refused to compromise with political parties administering capitalism. In short, only socialists are internationalists and could conduct themselves as such; but the overwhelming majority of the working class in all countries are not yet socialists.

The epitaph of war resistance as a means of stopping war was unwittingly spoken by the late Lord Morrison, a prominent member of the Labour Party. He opposed the first world war but supported the second one and entered the coalition government formed in 1940.

In between the two wars he was a war resister. He supported the Peace Letter Campaign. He pledged himself not to support another war. He delivered a speech at a War Resistance Demonstration at the Albert Hall on 5 December 1926, at which it was announced that the anti-war pledge had already received over 100,000 signatures. Morrison's speech and other speeches were published under title *Why We Will Not Fight*.

Here is a passage from Morrison's speech:

"We know from past and all too real experience how the declarations of parties and individuals towards wars are likely to fail when the testing time comes, and it may be that even many of those who have signed this declaration will fail, for wars have a terrible effect upon the public mind and upon the public psychology. Many of us here will remember the outbreak of the last war, when men of all classes, all political parties and all religious persuasions, one week were demanding that our country should maintain neutrality in the great war, and the next week had switched over to the opposite point of view, and were identifying themselves with military policies and the military outlook.

"Let us admit that there are very few men, even in the Labour Party, who could withstand the onslaught of war at that time, and as Mr. Ponsonby has said, let us ask ourselves what is to be our position if another war comes. We all hope that the effect of that great army of signatories will not be that when the war comes they have to decide what they are going to do, but we hope that one of the effects of that great army of signatories will be that they are ready to prevent war from breaking out between the great nations of the world at any future time.

"I ask you, therefore, to dedicate yourselves anew to the great cause of international peace. It is for you to let the Government know, and others know, that so far as you are concerned you are finished with war, and that you will take no part in it, either collectively or individually."

It is important that the true significance of the above should be appreciated. It would be foolish to dismiss it merely as an act of defection by Morrison and other signatories. Morrison was right when he said that wars have a terrible effect upon the public mind. It is an effect that few can withstand unless they have understood that capitalism is the cause of wars and that Socialism alone can end the war threat. People in the mass do not seek war but they accept capitalism, and capitalism leads them eventually into situations from which, like Morrison in 1939, they can see no escape except by war. The plain fact of the matter is that if workers support capitalism in peacetime they can be persuaded to support it in war time.

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Rise and Fall of C.N.D.

There have been movements of protest against war before but nothing quite like the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. There was the League of Nations Union Peace Ballot in 1935 which collected several million signatures for disarmament, but it only committed the signatories to seeking an agreed policy for all nations, to be negotiated through the League of Nations. A closer comparison is with the joint No More War movement and Peace Pledge Union which in 1937 claimed 120,000 members pledged to reject all wars and refuse military service. Comparison of membership is impossible because C.N.D. had no register of members; but it claimed at its peak to have the support of 20 per cent of the population for its far-reaching demand that the British government, acting alone, should renounce atomic weapons.

C.N.D. sprang up with dramatic suddenness. The symbol appeared as if by magic and its slogan 'ban the bomb' became a household phrase. Tens of thousands of people rallied to its marches and demonstrations. Now after years of effort it has declined almost to vanishing point - at its Trafalgar Square demonstration on 28 March 1970 it was reported that the police outnumbered the marchers. Sincerity and enthusiasm were not lacking in building up the movement, so what went wrong?

C.N.D. came into existence in 1958 from a number of small organisations that had been protesting about the development of atomic weapons. Its founders had as their immediate objective the abolition of Britain's independent nuclear deterrent - hence 'ban the bomb', and a final goal of world-wide disarmament. They reasoned that if enough people protested, any government would have to take action. They condemned the manufacture and stockpiling of bombs mainly on moral but also on tactical grounds. That it was against all human principles to use such a means of destruction. That the consequences of the use of such a bomb were so terrifying that it would, by mass destruction, defeat its object and cheat the victor of his spoils.

Their appeal was to the emotions; the sense of horror that human beings should die in warfare from such a bomb, or live to suffer the effects of radiation with its unknown consequences for future generations. This rallied support from young and old alike. As socialists, we share the horror but without the limitation to nuclear war. Death by any means in war is tragic, wasteful and hideous. The effects of 'conventional' instruments of death and disablement, bullets, bombs and gas from World War I can still be seen in countries throughout the world that have endured war.

C.N.D. propaganda was successful in spreading awareness of the horrors of nuclear war but many members of C.N.D. failed to realise that every one of the past advances in the destructiveness of war weapons had aroused similar horrified protest, but with negligible effect upon the adoption of the new weapons.

All capitalist powers equip themselves with the machines of war. And if, owing to the progress of science and technology these machines take the form of nuclear weapons, then have them they will.

The U.S.A. and Russia have enormously increased their stock of nuclear weapons and have enormously increased their destructive power since C.N.D. started its campaign and now other countries, including France and China, are in the nuclear race.

In the past it was always argued that, such was the destructiveness of newer types of weapons, and their consequent deterrent effect, they would never be used, as was said for example of poison gas, high explosives and indeed the bombers themselves. Capitalism has no qualms

about developing, stacking and, if necessary, using any type of weapon, especially as the progress of science always produces some counter device believed, rightly or wrongly, to provide defence.

C.N.D. started as a non-political organisation and claimed that its membership covered all shades of political thought (excluding the Socialist Party of Great Britain) and all shades of religious belief. Its members demanded that Great Britain should "go it alone", give up the bomb and thus give a moral lead to the rest of the world. In 1961, the Labour party conference passed a resolution supporting this aim of C.N.D. and the nuclear disarmers thought they were really on the road to success. This support by the Labour party conference for 'ban the bomb' could naturally have serious consequences for a party that hoped to regain political power. The executive conducted a determined counter campaign and at the next Labour party conference the decision was challenged and reversed.

Had the mass support C.N.D. claimed been determined and conscious, it could, through political action, have tested the issue at election times but this was not done. Politically, C.N.D.'s loyalties lay largely with the Labour party and thousands of C.N.D. members helped to return Labour governments to power in 1964 and 1966, only to find that they differed little from the Conservatives in respect of war and armaments. The Labour government proceeded to build and launch Polaris submarines that carry atomic missiles. "The first of Britain's four Polaris submarines, the Resolution, was launched today by the Queen Mother - the latest stage in what the Navy regards as the emergence of the submarine as the nation's best line of defence. The 7000-ton nuclear submarine, which has cost the nation £50 millions, slid into the Walney Channel at noon, as C.N.D. demonstrators paraded almost unnoticed with protest placards near the gates of the Vickers yard" (*The Guardian*, 16 September 1966). The second submarine was launched in February 1967 by the wife of the Labour Secretary for Defence - Mrs Edna Healey.

How little effect C.N.D. propaganda had had on the Labour Government which so many C.N.D. members supported was shown in March 1970, when the chief Labour Whip, Mr. Robert Mellish, M.P., denounced some Labour M.P.s who had abstained from voting for the Government's defence policy. He said:

"What I find nauseating above all else is that the Russians can have, and do have, the most appalling nuclear weapons, but Britain must not have them. Over a period of years it has been shown that between East and West the nuclear deterrent is the finest thing ever invented. I think I speak for the majority of the Labour Party" (*Times*, 6 March 1970).

Some C.N.D. members realised how useless it was to expect anything from the Labour Party. among them the late Lord Bertrand Russell, C.N.D.'s first President, who, after lifelong membership of the Labour Party, dramatically tore up his membership card in protest against Labour policy. Russell also became impatient with the ineffectiveness of C.N.D. and in 1960 formed a breakaway organisation, the Committee of 100, with a policy of civil disobedience and direct action. Three years later Russell resigned the presidency of the Committee of 100, giving as one of his reasons, that he had become occupied with work of a different kind, though directed to the same end. This was to take the form of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation and the Atlantic Peace Foundation to develop international resistance to nuclear war.

The attitude of the Socialist Party of Great Britain towards C.N.D. was clear and consistent. Sharing their detestation of nuclear war we had to point out that their efforts were wrongly directed and doomed to failure. War in all its forms is an outcome of capitalist rivalries. If war, including nuclear war, is to be abolished the pressing need is to work for Socialism. C.N.D.'s answer to this was that there was no need and no time to wait for Socialism - the bomb could be swept away in a short campaign with capitalism still in being. Events have proved that

C.N.D. and the Committee of 100 were wrong. They have not abolished the bomb or even slowed down its proliferation. War has not been stopped. War in Vietnam and Nigeria raged for years, without the bomb but with other modern weapons, causing untold misery and suffering.

The Nigerian Civil War and the war in the Middle East exposed the frailty of C.N.D.'s alleged opposition to war for many of their supporters rallied to the support of one side or the other.

Now C.N.D. and the Committee of 100 have spent their force. Many of their members have become disillusioned, others have formed organisations with new objectives for immediate attention - housing, unemployment, opposition to Apartheid and so on. The socialist case still stands - the only way to achieve the abolition of war.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The Socialist Party Opposes Two World Wars

The attitude of the Socialist Party of Great Britain towards the first and second world wars is set out in the two manifestos that were published in the name of the Party. The first was published in the Party's official organ the *Socialist Standard* in September 1914, and the second in the issue for October 1939.

The attitude expressed in them flowed logically out of the basic socialist principles of the Party. There was no need in the Socialist Party as there was in other political parties for the members to meet together to consider the particular circumstances with a view to reaching a decision. The attitude of the membership was known and all that the Executive Committee had to do was to prepare a statement placing it on record. Being a democratic organisation the branches and annual conference had, of course, complete freedom of action to object that these declarations were not in harmony with socialist principles if they had wished to do so: none did, there was no need.

These statements not only expressed the Socialist Party's attitude to the wars now past. The principles behind them endure and the statements represent the Party's attitude to wars that may arise in the future.

STATEMENT ISSUED IN AUGUST 1914

"Whereas the capitalists of Europe have quarrelled over the question of the control of trade routes and the world's markets, and are endeavouring to exploit the political ignorance and blind passions of the working class of their respective countries in order to induce the said workers to take up arms in what is solely their masters' quarrel, and

"Whereas further, the pseudo-socialists and labour 'Leaders' of this country, in common with their fellows on the Continent, have again betrayed the working class position, either through their ignorance of it, their cowardice, or worse, and are assisting the master class in utilising this thieves' quarrel to confuse the minds of the workers and turn their attention from the class struggle.

"The Socialist Party of Great Britain seizes the opportunity of reaffirming the socialist position which is as follows:

'That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living by the capitalist or master class and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

'That in society therefore there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a CLASS WAR, between those who possess, but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

'That the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers.'

"These armed forces therefore will only be set in motion to further the interests of the class who control them - the master class - and as the workers' interests are not bound up in the struggle for markets wherein their masters may dispose of the wealth they have stolen from them (the workers) but in the struggle to end the system under which they are robbed, they are not concerned with the present European struggle, which is already known as the 'BUSINESS' war, for it is their masters' interests which are involved, and not their own.

"The Socialist Party of Great Britain pledges itself to keep the issue clear by expounding the CLASS STRUGGLE, and whilst placing on record its abhorrence of this latest manifestation of the callous, sordid, and mercenary nature of the international capitalist class, and declaring that no interests are at stake justifying the shedding of a single drop of working-class blood, enters its emphatic protest against the brutal and bloody butchery of our brothers of this and other lands who are being used as food for cannon abroad while suffering and starvation are the lot of their fellows at home.

"Having no quarrel with the working class of any country, we extend to our fellow workers of all lands the expression of our goodwill and socialist fraternity, and pledge ourselves to work for the overthrow of capitalism and the triumph of Socialism.

"THE WORLD FOR THE WORKERS!
"THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. August 25th 1914

"Wage workers of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains, you have a world to win! Marx."

STATEMENT ISSUED IN SEPTEMBER 1939

"In this, our first issue of the Socialist Standard since the declaration of war, we have the opportunity of reaffirming the socialist attitude that we have consistently maintained since the formation of the party, including the war of 1914-18. With the increasing international tension of recent years we have again and again pressed home the undeniable truth that as long as the world is organized on a capitalist economic basis the never-ceasing rivalries will continue to produce conflicts ranging from mere diplomatic crises to gigantic armed struggles spreading over the oceans and continents of the world. The Socialist Party of Great Britain re-affirms that the interest of the world working class - on whom the untold misery and suffering of war inevitably falls - lies in abolishing the capitalist economic system.

"The present conflict is represented in certain quarters as one between 'freedom' and 'tyranny' and for the rights of small nations.

"The Socialist Party of Great Britain is fully aware of the sufferings of German workers under Nazi rule, and wholeheartedly supports the efforts of workers everywhere to secure democratic rights against the powers of suppression, but the history of the past decades shows the futility of war as a means of safeguarding democracy. After the last Great War - described as the war to end war, and as a war to make the world safe for democracy - the retention of capitalism resulted in the building up of new tyrannies and terrorisms through the inability of the capitalist states to solve the problems created by the system of private ownership of the means of production and distribution and the competitive scramble for raw materials, markets and control of trade routes. So little did the last war achieve its alleged purpose that the man who was prominently associated with the Allied victory and the claim that that war would be the last - Mr. Lloyd George - now has to confess that even this war may not be the last war. Writing in the Sunday Express, 'September 10th, Mr. Lloyd George says:

'It is only just over 20 years ago that France and Britain signed the armistice with Germany which brought to an end the bloodiest war in history. They are now fighting essentially the same struggle again.

'Germany is again the aggressor. Once more it is a fight for international right - the recognition of the equal right of nations, weak as well as strong, to lead their own independent lives so long as they do not interfere with the rights of their neighbours.

'This conflict has gone on periodically since the dawn of history .It will go on for many centuries to come unless and until mankind accepts that principle as one of the irrefragable commandments of humanity.'

"The Socialist Party of Great Britain calls on the workers of the world to refuse to accept this prospect, and calls upon them to recognise that only Socialism will end war.

"Among those who support the present war is the British Labour party, who long ago declared that the peace treaties of the last war contained the germs of a future war. At one time the Labour party, in its 'Labour Speakers' Handbook' 1922, declared that the 'unjust territorial arrangements' of the Peace Treaties must be rectified, including the return of Danzig and other Polish territory to Germany and the return of other Polish territory to Russia in accordance with the principle of 'self-determination'.

"The Socialist Party of Great Britain holds that neither the doctrine of 'self-determination', which the Labour party then claimed had been violated by the Peace Treaties, nor the German claim for a new carving-up of Europe, nor any other policy for settling minority problems and international rivalries within the framework of capitalism, is capable of bringing peace and democracy to the peoples of the world. Another war would be followed by new treaties forced on the vanquished by the victors, and by preparations for further wars, new dictatorships and terrorism.

"The Socialist Party of Great Britain therefore pledges itself to continue its work for Socialism, and reiterates the call it issued on the outbreak of war in 1914:

'Having no quarrel with the working class of any country, we extend to our fellow-workers of all lands the expression of our goodwill and socialist fraternity, and pledge ourselves to work for the overthrow of capitalism and the triumph of Socialism.'

"THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, S.P .G.B. *September 24th 1939.*"

British Labour and Communist parties support war

The Labour party supported the first and second world wars, on both occasions entering war-time coalition governments and supporting conscription. Between the wars the Labour party, playing on the war-weariness of the working class, was able to build up for itself the reputation of being the party of peace and disarmament as against the 'war-mongering Tories'. For a time a pacifist, George Lansbury, was the leader of the Labour party. This myth of the Labour party as the party of peace still survives to a certain extent and attracts pacifists and nuclear disarmers. Today, however, the Labour party is as patriotic and militarist as the Conservative party. When in office after the war it continued war-time conscription, began the manufacture of British atomic weapons, joined NATO and started a costly rearmament programme. It sent troops to fight in Malaya and Korea and the Wilson government 1964-70 gave general support to America in the Vietnam War.

The record of the so-called Communist Party is also one of support for working class slaughter. Judged by the standard of working class interests and socialist principles, its attitude to war is one of repeated changes and contradictions. Always vehement in the declared intention of seeking peace and safeguarding democracy, the Communist Party has had no difficulty in supporting war and defending dictatorship. Nominally international in outlook and affiliation it finds no difficulty in appealing to British workers in the name of patriotism, or in applauding the virulent nationalism encouraged by the Russian government which habitually refers to the second world war as Russia's Great Patriotic War. The Communist parties abroad followed the same devious course.

Prior to the second world war it made the defence of democracy against dictatorship the keystone of its policy - while of course at the same time supporting the Russian dictatorship. At the time of the German aggression against Czechoslovakia the Communist Party opposed the effort of the Chamberlain government to reach agreement with Hitler's government and urged instead the policy of alliance with Russia. On 3 October 1938, the *Daily Worker* published an editorial which contained the following:

"There must be no further confidence in Chamberlain, Labour must stand firm in Parliament today and give a lead which will rally all the truly patriotic and progressive forces in Parliament against the shameful Munich betrayal."

"Standing firm" involved readiness in the last resort to go to war. Two days later the Secretariat of the Communist Party repudiated the article, probably because it was a too outspoken statement of the logic of their position that Britain and France should take a strong line against Hitler.

The repudiated article nevertheless again became Communist policy, and on 30 March 1939 the *Daily Worker* came out with an appeal to Churchill and the Liberal and Labour leaders to form a new government to pursue that policy, under the heading "Communist Appeal to Attlee, Sinclair and Churchill", It went on to say:

"In a swift and sensational move to get practical action to save the country in the rapidly deepening crisis, Harry Pollitt, on behalf of the Communist Party of Great Britain, yesterday addressed to Major Attlee, leader of the Parliamentary Labour party, Sir Archibald Sinclair, leader of the Liberal party, and Mr Winston Churchill, most prominent of the Conservative 'rebels' an appeal that they shall 'get together without another minute's delay'."

When war broke out six months later this was still the Communist policy, put forward with an even greater insistence than before, since the party officially and wholeheartedly supported the war and urged the removal of the existing government in order to make the prosecution of the war more effective.

When the Russian government made its pact with Hitler in August 1939 (an event which the Communists had said was unthinkable) the *Daily Worker* hailed it as a "victory for peace and Socialism", a "blow to Fascist war plans and the policy of Chamberlain" (23 August, 1939).

War broke out in spite of this alleged safeguarding of peace by the Hitler-Stalin pact, and on 2 September 1939 the Communist Party's Central Committee issued a manifesto supporting the war:

"You are now being called upon to take part in the most cruel war in the history of the world.

"One that need never have taken place. One that could have been avoided even in the very last days of the crisis, had we had a People's Government in Britain.

"Now that the war has come, we have no hesitation in stating the policy of the Communist party.

"We are in support of all necessary measures to secure the victory of democracy over fascism.

"But fascism will not be defeated by the Chamberlain government.

"The first and most vital step to victory is a new government in which the key positions are in the hands of the trusted representatives of the people who have neither imperialist aims, nor latent sympathies with fascism.

"This is absolutely vital for any success in a war against fascism abroad and the friends of fascism in Britain."

But this declaration of support for the war, though in line with the Communist Party's own policy of preceding months, was now out of step with Russia's policy of friendship with Germany, so that too was repudiated. The communist pamphlet *How to Win the War* was withdrawn from circulation. Harry Pollitt, Secretary of the Communist Party, along with other members made abject apologies for having failed to appreciate the true nature of the war, and the new line was adopted of opposition to the 'imperialist war'. On 4 October 1939 the *Daily Worker* declared:

"We are against the continuance of the war. We demand that negotiations be immediately opened for the establishment of peace in Europe."

The Communist Party continued its opposition to the "imperialist war" until Germany invaded Russia in 1941, when again they decided that the war was for the defence of democracy and must be supported. They outdid the most zealous in their backing of war policies. They voted for Conservative candidates in by-elections in opposition in some cases to anti-war candidates and denounced strikes.

On 19 September 1943, the London Communist Party held a demonstration in Trafalgar Square at which Harry Pollitt urged the immediate opening of a second front on the Continent. His speech, published by the Communist Party under the title *Where does Britain stand*, contained the following appeal to the workers:

"The Communist Party has called, and calls now, for the greatest production that is possible - to make sacrifices and to enforce sacrifices on others; to support every measure to win the war, however irksome it may be, and to do it despite all provocation; and to avert any break in the continuity of production" (page 14).

In March 1944 the South Wales miners came out on strike. The *Daily Worker* admitted that the strikers "have a powerful case" but instead of supporting them it told them to go back to work. The *Daily Worker* editorial of 11 March 1944 contained the following:

"GO BACK

"The miners know that the *Daily Worker* is their friend and that there is no ulterior motive in the advice we give; and that there are no vested interests lurking behind our columns. And our advice to the South Wales miners is: GO BACK TO WORK.

"We say this to the miners because an immediate return to work is urgently necessary in the interests of the fight against the monstrous fascism which we are all pledged to crush, in the interests of the miners themselves and of the unity and strength of the working class movement.

"By going back now the miners can knock a weapon out of the despicable gang of pro-fascists and anti-second fronters, who have gleefully seized on this dispute to disrupt the fighting unity of Britain's workers and soldiers, and to delay the day when Britain's full strength takes the field by the side of the Red Army."

It was only where the war interests of the Russian government conflicted with those of the British and American ruling class that the Communists deviated from the National government's policy, as is shown by their campaign in 1943 for an immediate second front in Europe to relieve German pressure on Russia though they had opposed the opening of an Eastern front by Russia in the early years of the war when Russia and Germany were bound by their Pact.

Here, of course, we have the explanation of the endless changes of Communist Party policy. Underlying the inconsistencies was the one consistency, always to be in step with the Russian government and always to support whatever policy the Russian government favoured here or abroad. Not until the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 did 'British Communist Party support falter.

Soon after the end of the second world war Russia and the other allies fell out and came into conflict. Russia took the place of Germany as the expanding power which had to be kept in place in order to maintain Western domination of the world. The Russian government calculated that with a strong anti-war feeling at home the Western powers would be less ready to resist Russian expansionism. Accordingly the Communist Parties throughout the world were mobilized for a great peace offensive. Organizations such as the World Peace Congress, the British Peace Committee and the Ex-Servicemen's Movement for Peace appeared as adjuncts of the open parties, all putting over peace propaganda aimed at weakening the Western powers' determination to resist.

When the nuclear disarmament movement developed the Communist Party was at first hesitant because C.N.D. was also opposed to the Russian H-bomb. In the end, however, they decided to move in, calculating that C.N.D. anti-war propaganda would serve their purposes just as well. It is this which explains why in the internal debates of C.N.D. the Communist Party tried to keep the movement as broad and the appeal as vague as possible, consistently opposing those in favour of direct action or independent electoral action. They were not interested in the proclaimed aims of the movement but only in using it to spread a vague anti-war feeling in order to help the foreign policy of the Russian government.

Even on atomic weapons the Communist Party was not consistent. The *Daily Worker*, 6 August 1963, declared that the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima was "the greatest crime in the history of warfare", but at the time the bomb was dropped the *Daily Worker* had a different view. On 7 August 1945 the editorial said:

"The employment of the new weapon on a substantial scale should expedite the surrender of Japan. Valuable lives in the allied nations will have been saved by the new discovery."

The cartoon of the following day showed American bombers with "SURRENDER OR DIE-POTSDAM" painted on them showering atomic bombs on Japan. The suggestion that the atomic bomb be used "on a substantial scale" contrasts sharply with their later hypocritical opposition to nuclear weapons.

The validity of Communist Party policy in the last resort has to be judged by its claim that the achievement of Socialism depends on the defence and strengthening of Russia because Russia is a socialist country; but there is no Socialism in Russia. Whatever the hopes of the men who seized power in Russia in 1917, events have fully proved the contention of the Socialist Party of Great Britain throughout its history that Socialism could not be the outcome of the rise of the Russian Bolsheviks to power. Because the workers of Russia and the rest of the world in 1917 did not understand and want Socialism and because that is still true, what has developed in Russia is a system of State capitalism under the dictatorship of a ruthless group which to regain power has suppressed every independent working class organisation.

All the essential features of capitalism continue to exist in Russia; the wages system, production for sale with a view to profit, great inequality of incomes. Above all Russia, like other capitalist states, has developed on imperialist lines seeking to expand its territories and spheres of interest and to find outside its borders markets for its goods, cheap raw materials for its manufacturers, and to acquire control of strategic points for a future war.

In peace as in war, in domestic struggles and in foreign policy, the British Communist Party is a supporter of Russian State capitalism and an enemy of the working class and of Socialism.

Socialism and Violence

War cannot solve working class problems. It cuts across the basic identity of interest of the workers of the world, setting sections of them at enmity with each other in the interests of the capitalist class. It elevates violence into the position of arbiter in place of the common desire for mutual peace and happiness. Its effect is wholly evil. It depraves all the participants by forcing them to concentrate on the best methods of producing misery and of killing each other. It elevates lying, cheating, disabling and murdering opponents into virtues, confers honours on those who practise these means most successfully. Young men and women in their most impressionable years, have the vile methods of warfare imposed on them and are filled with the idea that violence and not understanding is the final solution in all problems. Many of those who have been subjected to the atmosphere of war remain addicted to violence when hostilities have come to a temporary end.

Socialism is completely opposed to war and to what it represents. The Socialist Party, however, is not pacifist in outlook. It is opposed to war not on some abstract religious or moral grounds but because it conflicts with the interests of the working class. Wars are fought to protect and further the interests of rival capitalist groups. In these orgies of death and destruction which capitalism periodically and inevitably produces, workers suffer and die not for their own interests but for those of their masters. In all wars, as the Socialist Party said on the outbreak of the first world war, "there are no interests at stake justifying the shedding of a single drop of working class blood".

It is true that the pioneers of Socialism, among them Marx and Engels, were prepared to support war in certain circumstances. They were prepared to support 'progressive' wars against feudal reaction, victory in which they hoped would strengthen democracy and help the workers movement. They were also prepared to support so-called wars of defence. Events have proved them to have been wrong. This is one of the few questions on which the Socialist Party disagrees with Marx.

The early socialists saw the immediate future as a combined struggle by workers and capitalists to overthrow feudal monarchy, to be followed quickly by a working class struggle to overthrow capitalism. They knew that the capitalists would oppose the workers in that struggle and they knew that capitalists, once they had beaten the feudal reaction would seek its assistance against the workers. What Marx and Engels could not see until further experience had ripened their judgement was that the workers' movements to overthrow capitalism would for long grow very slowly and would be dependent on the workers coming eventually to understand and accept the socialist case.

They did not see the absolute necessity of a socialist working class before Socialism could be achieved, but acted on the assumption that Socialism would come speedily through the workers almost spontaneously opposing the capitalist class.

Further experience of that view has brought to the Socialist Party the realisation that progress to Socialism depends finally on the development of the workers towards a clear understanding of the socialist case. That understanding must be based on recognition of the class struggle and of the necessarily world-wide basis of socialist action. Anything which in the slightest way encourages the workers to retain the blighting and poisoning belief in nationalism and so-called national interests, perpetuates the dangerous illusion of class harmony and plays always into the hands of the capitalist class. Only class-conscious socialists can speak across the frontiers of the capitalist nations to the working class of the world, and they can do so only because they

are entirely free from the taint of so-called national interests which can be none other than capitalist interests.

This emphasis on the necessity of socialist understanding is one of the specific contributions of the Socialist Party to socialist theory. It leads also to the appreciation that the socialist revolution cannot take the form of violent insurrection. Violence of this sort has been characteristic of most of the revolutions of this century and the last; but these revolutions were not socialist despite the claims made for the more recent ones. They have been basically bourgeois revolutions which overthrew the old order to allow capitalism to develop - in other words bourgeois revolutions. Such revolutions are always minority revolutions; they take the form of an active revolutionary minority leading the mass of the people. In these circumstances, although there are strong social forces on the side of the revolutionaries, their opponents in power, strengthened by the knowledge that only a minority are active against them, can try to resist with suppression and terror. All these features - leadership, revolutionary minority, despotic rulers, violent insurrections and counter-insurrections - are all connected and are all features not of the socialist revolution but of the bourgeois revolution. Unfortunately, through the writings of those involved in the Russian Revolution, Lenin and Trotsky in particular, this wrong conception of the socialist revolution has become widespread.

It has a certain romantic attraction for those who want immediate action, an attraction far and above that of the slow, prosaic task of socialist agitation, education and organisation. People attracted by such romanticizing look to those parts of the world where such violent revolutions are still occurring: to Latin America, Asia and Africa. In this they are letting their emotions get the better of them. For it still remains true that Socialism is only possible on the basis of large-scale social production, a form which is predominant primarily in such areas as Europe, North America, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. In these areas political and social conditions are different from those in the less industrialized parts of the world. They are so different in fact that theories derived from the experience of violent insurrections in Russia, China and Cuba are irrelevant.

In many areas where capitalism dominates all aspects of life the vast majority of the population are members of the working class, selling their mental and physical energies for a wage or salary. This working class has acquired a considerable degree of social awareness and discipline; it has developed strong trade union organisation; it has long become accustomed to work on democratic lines in its trade union organisations and in the use of the vote. In these countries the working class, though not socialist, is even today strong enough to restrain the capitalist class from arbitrary acts of violence against them. The next step in working class understanding will be in the direction of Socialism.

As the socialist working class movement grows it will act as a further restraining influence on the capitalist class. The vote is a potential class weapon and can be used by a socialist working class to win political power to overthrow capitalism. This conception of the socialist revolution as involving conscious, majority political action derives from a study of the facts of social life and from the experiences of the working class in those areas where the capitalist system is most fully developed.

The Socialist Party in rejecting the idea of the socialist revolution as a series of violent insurrections and counter-insurrections does so on a study of the facts. The socialist revolution involves compelling the capitalist class to surrender its privileges. The way to achieve this is through a socialist working class democratically gaining control of the publicly organised means of coercion, the State.

Socialist society, established on a world-wide basis, will remove the cause of war. With common ownership and production for use will disappear for all time the rivalry of capitalist

firms and states for markets, raw materials, trade routes and the like. Socialist society will require no public power of coercion. There will be no need for armed forces, law courts and jails. Such institutions are only necessary in a society divided into antagonistic classes. Socialist society will see the end of all classes and privileges. It will be a society of equals in which all will gain from co-operating harmoniously. Government of people will be replaced by administration of things. Understanding will replace coercion both in social relations and in settling social problems.

With the establishment of Socialism war will disappear for ever and mankind will have stepped out of the jungle.

APPENDIX

Some Statements on War and its Economic Causes

Joseph Chamberlain on the search for markets (1890)

The late Mr Joseph Chamberlain, Minister in Conservative governments said, in a speech to the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce in 1890:

"All the great offices of State are occupied with commercial affairs. The Foreign Office and the Colonial Office are chiefly engaged in finding new markets and in defending old ones. The War Office and the Admiralty are mostly occupied in preparations for the defence of these markets and for the protection of our commerce."

Marshal Foch and Marshal Lyautey on French aims (1918 and 1922)

Marshal Foch, French army leader in the first world war, admitted the commercial nature of the forces leading to war:

"What do we all seek? New outlets for an ever-increasing commerce and for industries which, producing far more than they can consume or sell, are constantly hampered by an increasing competition. And then? Why! New areas for trade are cleared by cannon shot. Even the Bourse (the Stock Exchange) for reasons of interest, can cause armies to enter into campaign. (*United Services Magazine*, London, December 1918.)

Marshal Lyautey, who was in command of the French army fighting in Morocco in 1922 was equally explicit:

"French soldiers are fighting in Morocco to acquire territory in which rise rivers capable of supplying power for electrification schemes which will prove of great advantage to French trade. When we have acquired the last zone of cultivable territory, when we have nothing but mountains in front of us, we shall stop. Our object is commercial and economic. The military expedition in Morocco is a means not an end. Our object is the extension of foreign trade." (*Star*, London, 31 October 1922.)

Why Britain conquered India

Capitalist interest in territorial expansion and war is not always brought into the open but quite a number of frank statements have been made. The late Lord Brentford who was Conservative Home Secretary 1924-28, in a speech reproduced in the *Daily News*, London, 17 October 1925, frankly admitted why Britain conquered India:

"We did not conquer India for the benefit of the Indians. I know it is said at Missionary meetings that we conquered India to raise the level of the Indians. That is cant. We conquered India as the outlet for the goods of Great Britain. We conquered India by the sword, and by the sword we should hold it."

Since then, of course, Indian capitalism has achieved self-government as an independent Republic very tenuously linked to the Commonwealth.

Admiral Plunkett on American expansion (1928)

An indication of the way America was seeking world expansion was given in 1928 by the American Rear-Admiral Plunkett to whose views reference was made by Sir Hugh Denison, former Commissioner for Australia in the United States. He was addressing the English-speaking Union in London and said:

"To be quite candid, Admiral Plunkett bases his views on two things - he has explained this to me several times, so I know what is in his mind. He says: America today is so highly industrialised that she must secure markets in other parts of the world. Great Britain owns most of the markets of the world and the only place America can possibly extend to in regard to her exports seems to be in British countries or countries of the British Empire, and that is going to bring her at once into economic opposition to Great Britain. Further, as America lends more and more money to other countries she will become, in spite of herself an imperialist nation, and that will bring her into economic conflict with the other great nations.' (Daily Telegraph, London, 15 February 1928.)

Japanese challenge in the Pacific (1936)

In the first world war Germany was temporarily defeated as contender for dominance in the world's markets, with Japan on the side of the anti-German powers. Already by 1936 Japan had become, along with Germany, the new menace to British and American capitalism. Lord Bledisloe, former Governor-General of New Zealand, addressing the Liverpool branch of the British Empire Society on 20 March 1936, disclosed rivalry between British, Japanese and American interests in the Pacific which strongly recalled the Anglo-German rivalry in the Atlantic which preceded war in 1914:

"For five years I lived in two islands in the Pacific Ocean, where I was not only Governor-General but Commander-in-Chief. The most profound sources of anxiety there in the matter of security from outside interference are the craving for territorial expansion by nations whose shores are washed by the Pacific, and the gradual crushing out by subsidised foreign competition of the mercantile shipping of the British Empire. The gravity of the shipping position lies in increased helplessness in time of war. It is no good looking to resources of comparatively poorer countries like Australia and New Zealand to find means to fight this unfair competition. It must be done by the British people and the British government or, I warn you, British shipping will be eliminated from the Pacific Ocean." (Daily Telegraph, London, 21 March 1936.)

Australian Prime Minister on markets and war (1936)

The late Mr W. M. Hughes, Prime Minister of Australia during the first world war, speaking at Brisbane on 24 July 1936:

"The increasing intensity of competition for economic markets must lead to armed conflict unless an economic settlement is found. This, however, is hardly to be hoped for. Talk about peace in a world armed to the teeth is utterly futile." (News Chronicle, London, 25 July 1936.)

America displaces Britain (1947)

In an article "America wins an Empire" cabled from America to the *Evening Standard*, London, 22 April 1947, the writer, Frederick Cook, summarised the position as it was at that time resulting from American acquisition of numerous strategically important Pacific islands under

United Nations mandate, and from the American treaty with the Philippines and her occupation of Japan:

"In Congress suggestions are already heard that what the United States needs is a new Government Department on the lines of Britain's Colonial Office to take over control of all the 'non-contiguous territories'. These are far more numerous than most Americans have yet realised, with their attention directed principally to the 'iniquities' of the 'imperialist nations' of Europe. In the Pacific half of the world, America now has Alaska; the extensive holdings in Hawaii with bases at Pearl Harbour, Kure, Howland, Jarvis and Baker Islands; American Samoa; the Marshalls, Carolines and Marianas; bases on Tarawa and Makin in the British Gilbert and Ellice Islands colony; Wake; Midway; Guam; forces in China, Japan and the Philippines, Already the Pacific is spoken of here as 'an American lake'."

When later on American troops withdrew from China the Secretary of the American navy announced that United States naval forces would continue to operate in the Western Pacific. "The Navy," he said, "had more or less inherited from Britain the job of keeping the sea lanes open and stabilising areas from which exports came". (*The Times*, London, 1 March, 1947.)

Wall Street, the Marines and the South American Market

A former Major-General in the United States Marine Corps, Smedley D. Butler, is on record as saying:

"There isn't a trick in the racketeering bag that the military gang is blind to. It has its 'finger men' (to point out enemies) its 'muscle men' (to destroy enemies) its 'brain guys' (to plan war preparations) and a 'Big Boss' (supernationalistic capitalism).

"It may seem odd for me, a military man, to adopt such a comparison. Truthfulness compels me to do so. I spent 33 years and 4 months in active military service as a member of our country's most agile military force - the Marine Corps. I served in all commissioned ranks from a second lieutenant to major-general. And during that period I spent most of my time being a high-class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street and for the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism.

"I suspected I was just a part of a racket at the time. Now I am sure of it. Like all members of the military profession, I never had an original thought until I left the service. My mental faculties remained in suspended animation while I obeyed the orders of the higher-ups. This is typical with everyone in the military service.

"Thus I helped make Mexico and especially Tampico safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped to make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street. The record of racketeering is long. I helped purify Nicaragua for the international banking house of Brown Brothers in 1909-12. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for American sugar interests in 1916. In China in 1927 I helped see to it that the Standard Oil went on its way unmolested.

"During those years, I had, as the boys in the back room would say, a swell racket. I was rewarded with honors, medals and promotions. Looking back on it, I feel that I might have given Al Capone a few hints. The best he could do was to operate his racket in three city districts. I operated on three continents." (Quoted in the *Western Socialist*, November, 1961).